

The NUM executive is retreating in disarray in the face of the UDM threat. They don't have the policies nor the tactics to fight the breakaway. Appeals to union loyalty have done nothing to stem the haemorrhaging of NUM membership, and warnings that the UDM will not be recognised by the TUC or the Labour Party have fallen on stony ground.

BREAK THE BREAKAWAY

The NUM Executive Committee has now voted by 12 to 6 to give the NCB a written undertaking tying pay to incentives and productivity. This was another defeat for Scargill and another victory for MacGregor.

THE UDM has consolidated its base in Notts and the NUM loyalists are having great difficulties in winning even those who voted against the breakaway. Many loyalists are wavering when faced with the overwhelming majority who have gone with the UDM and the continued refusal of the Coal Board to recognise the NUM. Why sign up with the NUM, say the wavering elements, when it can't fight for us, hasn't got any facilities, and isn't recognised? Attempts to win recognition by putting faith in the Coal Industry National Reference Tribunal have been disappointed by Coal Board obstruction and UDM intransigence.

Far from the UDM being confined to Notts, the cancer has successfully spread to other Midlands pits in South Derbyshire and Warwickshire, as well as linking up with the Durham mechanics and Agecroft in Lancs. NUM area officials in traditionally more militant areas seem to be pursuing the 'strategy' of closing their eyes to the UDM in the hope that it will simply go away or peter out by itself.

But the UDM is openly boasting of plans to oust the NUM in five pits in South Yorkshire and three in Scotland. The UDM is playing on the demoralisation in the wake of the defeat of the 1984-5 Great Strike. In this it is being given every assistance by the NCB.

The NUM executive was told at a recent meeting of attempts by senior NCB officials to persuade area leaders of the NUM to defect to the UDM. Apparently thousands of pounds are waiting for those who lead their members out of the NUM. Jack Jones, the right wing leader of a Leicestershire NUM already falling into UDM hands, reported how he was approached and told not to worry about losing out "on anything he might enjoy through the NUM" — pension, car, etc. He was told that the NCB wanted to "stitch up the motorway block": the Midlands area including the Vale of Belvoir, where the Board will concentrate most of its future investments in 'super pits'.

Clearly the NCB is out to spread the UDM into every high profit pit, split the miners down the middle leaving the NUM impotent, and organising only those on the 'un-productive' fringe. With the pliant UDM the rate of exploitation can be hiked with little difficulty and miners shackled to the fluctuating

and easily manipulated profitability of their pits. To sweeten this pill MacGregor has cleverly conjured up the pie in the sky prospect of UDM miners earning £20,000 or even £30,000 a year and has already offered the UDM a significantly better pay offer compared with what is on the table for the NUM.

The NUM executive's response to this has been totally inadequate. Some, most notably those from South Wales and Scotland, have been arguing for some sort of deal with Lynk and the UDM. Already some area and local officials are attempting to fend off the UDM challenge by doing a UDM and encouraging their members to work harder and make their pits more productive. True, Arthur Scargill has not gone along with this line. But he has no alternative. His promise of 'guerrilla' resistance to pit closures has been shown by the loss of 20,000 jobs to be idle, faith in the Labour Party and TUC resolutions to be frighteningly naive, and claims that there was no defeat to be empty bluster.

Indeed, Scargill's bureaucratic change the rule book response to the scabbing during the strike, his refusal to isolate and expel the scab leaders, and his amazing denial of the reality of defeat have played into the hands of the Coal Board and the UDM. Scab leaders were consequentially left free to organise and the rank and file were disorientated. This approach of Scargill, especially the refusal to face the truth no matter how bitter, has led to light-minded downplaying of the extent of the success of the NCB's manipulating of anti-Scargill feelings, lining up the most profitable parts for privatisation, and destroying the NUM as an effective union.

Faced with the NCB's moves towards creating 'Japanese' style unionism and preparing the 'super pits' for private capital Scargill has nothing to offer but the 'solidarity' of Willis and Kinnoch. When the NCB calculatingly agreed to give the UDM's membership a substantial 'loyalty payment' in reward for scabbing along with a significantly higher incentive payment, Scargill's only reply to this deliberate humiliation of the NUM was to deny the problem. Likewise, when the Notts miners overwhelmingly voted to break away from the NUM, Arthur tried to put a brave face on this catastrophe

by playing with figures to belittle the problem.

If the NUM is to be rebuilt and the UDM destroyed, it is essential to squarely face the facts of defeat. The truth is that for the NUM the consequences of being beaten in the Great Strike are proving to be as devastating as those suffered in the wake of the 1926 General Strike. In Notts itself there can be little doubt that the situation is considerably worse.

The Spencerite bosses' union in 1926 never got a majority of Notts miners, most not being in any union. The UDM was launched with a 72% vote and looks like drawing in an even greater number with the help of the NCB. It should also be remembered that in 1926 the Notts Area of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain accounted for only 3% of the national membership. Today 17% of all miners are in Notts and it looks quite possible for the UDM to soon notch up a membership of around 40,000 compared with the NUM's 110,000. In other words, we might find the situation where between a quarter to a third of all miners will not be in the NUM, a big difference from 1926.

Scargill's paralysis has left the field open to the NCB, the UDM, and those national and area leaders who want to hatch some sort of compromise with the help of the TUC. Of course, Scargill is himself a possible sacrificial lamb for any bureaucratic re-unification deal. Already he has been isolated on the executive on a whole series of issues, accepting the NCB's productivity dictat being the most recent. But any such UDM/NUM unification carried out with the aid of the TUC might not only see Scargill ditched, but the NUM destroyed as an effective union capable of defending its members' interests. The arrogant Clive Jenkins has already floated the idea that the NUM revert to a federation along the lines of the MFGB, something the NCB with its privatisation plans would dearly love to see. The TUC General Council is unlikely to come up with anything radically different; certainly Kinnoch and Willis are not at all worried about Scargill's loss of power and the prospect of his demise.

This why it is foolish to say the least to put any trust in the TUC and Kinnoch. Yet Scargill's argument against joining the UDM has rested almost entirely on the claim that it would not be recognised by the Labour Party and the TUC. The

weakness of his argument is being exposed both by more votes to break away and the treacherous response of Kinnoch himself.

According to Kinnoch, UDM members will remain eligible for Labour Party membership and on TV he openly defended the pro-UDM Labour MP Don Concannon, praising him as a "good MP". Given this illustration of Kinnoch's contempt for the NUM, one can only wonder what cowardly opportunist reasons the so-called militant-led South Wales Area NUM had for inviting this viper to address its executive. One thing is for certain: these leaders who initiated 'back to work without an agreement' at the end of the Great Strike are running scared of the UDM and place their hopes for the future in the decidedly dubious prospect offered by "the next Labour government".

The UDM break away is of course part of a larger realignment in the labour movement, with the eventual goal of creating a 'Japanese' situation in industry. At the heart of this is Eric Hammond's EETPU, which has already negotiated countless one union, no strike deals with grateful companies. The EETPU has also thrown down the gauntlet to the TUC over taking government money for ballots. The fact that the TUC is visibly inching away from its Wembley decisions, fearing an open break with the EETPU and its AEU ally, can only encourage those determined on the creation of a British Solidarnosc.

The EETPU has already moved to link up with the UDM. A fulltime liaison officer has been appointed and a merger is being considered. An EETPU based energy/manufacturing union could pose an even greater threat to the NUM than the UDM does today. For that reason there is no room whatsoever for complacency and official optimism. Scargill is no traitor, but he has no fighting strategy. Indeed, as we have shown, his faith in non-UDM recognition by the TUC and Labour Party opens the door to scum like Willis and Kinnoch, who surely proved their worth during the Great Strike. Faced with this it is staggering to read in the November edition of the Straight Leftists' *Communist* that it "is a diversion from the main issue" to even think that there is a "crisis" in the "working class", let alone "a failure within the left of the labour movement and especially in the tactics

of the NUM." Clearly there are none so blind as those who will not see.

There is no way the UDM can be quickly and painlessly beaten. The NUM is in deep trouble and only revolutionary communist politics can equip the militant rank and file with the ideology to go onto the offensive. The NUM in Notts and other UDM areas does not look likely in the short to medium term of becoming capable of playing the role of a union, that of a basic organisation of workers' defence. Even on a national scale it is having the greatest difficulty in defending its members pay, jobs, and conditions, let alone winning justice for the victimised and imprisoned.

There is a great danger of militants becoming enmeshed in the parochial perspective of fighting for small victories to the detriment of constructing a longterm strategy of re-forging the unity of miners. Small victories are needed; this should not be doubted. But if we are wrapped up in the day to day struggle the Labour Party/TUC unity at any price mongers will be given a free hand along with area moves to UDMise the NUM by bowing down before the Coal Board's demands for higher productivity.

Clive Jenkins's new federation scheme, Basnett's conciliation commission, and all other TUC compromises must be rejected out of hand. Spencerism last time round was not smashed but incorporated; the dire consequences of which were fully revealed during the strike. This time round the NUM must be rebuilt on firm foundations and this can only be done if the militant rank and file firmly place their stamp on it, only if they dictate the conditions and make the running.

So while we consider calls to kill the UDM through isolation in such areas as South Yorkshire correct this cannot be done if it is left up to head in the sand officials. But in Notts and other Midlands areas the UDM horse has bolted and the NUM rump shows distinct signs of growing isolation. It is because of this that we have floated the tentative suggestion of militants entering the UDM in an organised fashion in such areas in order to overcome their isolation from the backward majority. In doing this they should have the clear aim of turning the UDM on its head and creating the ideal conditions for the re-unification of the NUM.

Jack Conrad



THE LENINIST

1985

1985 WAS DOMINATED by the miners' Great Strike. While it shook the British establishment it undoubtedly ended in defeat. The consequences of this defeat cast its rightist shadow not only over the National Union of Mineworkers but the whole workers' movement.

For the NUM the defeat meant the formation of the scab outfit running under the name of Union of Democratic Mineworkers. And far from this being confined to Nottinghamshire it spread throughout the Midlands and beyond. While the UDM breakaway rapidly grew, the leadership of the NUM retreated. Some attempted to outdo the UDM at an Area level by demanding greater productivity from the men and as night follows day this spread to the Executive Committee.

Faced with this headlong stampede away from militancy Arthur Scargill has chosen not to see. Such a Nelsonian gesture might have preserved his left credentials intact, but this has been useless in fighting the UDM let alone mounting the sustained campaign of agitation needed to secure the release of the score of miners who still languish in prison and the hundreds who remain victimised and unemployed.

Retreat was not confined to the NUM. The TUC has backed down from its confrontation with the AEU and EETPU over Tory legislation on ballots and cash. And far from this consolidating TUC unity the signs are that Hammond at least is determined on a course which could see a EETPU based energy union embracing the UDM and creating a British version of *Solidarnosc*.

Because of the miners' defeat Thatcher's government became increasingly arrogant and authoritarian. The police were equipped for internal conflict in Britain of almost civil war proportions, taking on board all the lessons of fighting the Irish masses in Derry and Belfast. Now legislation to curb protest demonstrations will be added to other measures designed to strengthen the state and the powers of the police. Thatcher also aggressively sought to preserve Britain's standing as a major imperialist power by lining up with the United States in an anti-Soviet war drive epitomised by participation in the World War III winning Star Wars project.

But although Thatcher has knocked aside opponent after opponent like she was shooting ducks at a fair ground it must be understood that the working class remains undefeated. And strong as Thatcher may seem the British economy continues to stagnate and decline relative to its rivals. To change this situation Thatcher needs to inflict on the working class the strategic defeat she hoped would come about with her victory over the miners.

What 1985 shows us with painful clarity is that our leadership and organisations are woefully inadequate for the conditions of the 1980s. Now that the pressure from the left is off Kinnock has swung to the right and launched an anti-Militant purge. After proving his loyalty to the bosses with quiet treachery during the Great Strike he has found his neo-realist voice and is always ready and eager to noisily strike at the left.

Despite this the left, lacking as it does political independence from Labourism; has in the main been dragged in Kinnock's wake. Splits, explosions, wrecks, and shams are the inevitable result. In our own CPGB the crisis in the working class movement has produced liquidationism from all opportunist tendencies and shades. So we are presented with a paradox of capitalist crisis producing a crisis in the very organisations which have hitherto claimed to be its bitter opponents. This must change in 1986. We must begin to build the organisations which can not only bury Thatcher but the capitalist system itself. Most importantly the decline and degeneration of our CPGB must be ended. *The Leninist* dedicates itself to these tasks.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Internationalism

While I accept that you are not Trotskyites you do seem to attack the liberation movements and CPs around the world like them. In fact you go beyond most Trots who simply ignore the world communist movement: you cannot keep your mouths shut.

The Apartheid regime is of course interested in anything and anybody which may disrupt, divide and confuse. You are false friends to the liberation movements. A broad approach is needed which excludes you. You equate the ANC with the IRA: this is a disgrace. The IRA are not socialists they are thugs who split the working class in Northern Ireland.

Its all very well quoting Lenin — that was a long time ago — things have changed. You are obsessed with polemic and telling others what to do. What the working class needs is action not long 'theoretical' supplements. The so-called 'Leninist' you print is going down the pan: you half admit it yourselves. It is getting less and less regular, people are 'breaking' from you saying you'll never get anywhere.

The working class doesn't need you. The general crisis of capitalism is destroying the material basis for reformism. Honest leaders of our class are responding to this by moving to the left, Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn and others are the future. They have a mass base unlike you sectarian hair splitters. You will never influence anyone or anything.

Tony Kemp
London

Australia

Dear comrades,
We thank you for your publication which we are receiving regularly, and is of assistance to us.

Yours fraternally
P. Dluh for
P D Symon
General Secretary
Socialist Party of Australia

South Africa

Dear comrades,
We have received the latest copy of *The Leninist* and we would like to receive three copies of No.25 and three copies of No.24 which deal with the South African Communist Party.

We thank you for your assistance.
Yours sincerely,
G. Johannes for
Solly Smith
Chief Representative
African National Congress

Ex-Bennite

Previously, I have been a member of only one political party — the Labour Party. I was basically a Bennite, basically, a believer in the parliamentary road to socialism and the Alternative Economic Strategy. My disillusionment with Labour came during my time as a graduate student when I gained my first serious acquaintance with Marxism, and where I also gained my first experience of fighting an election campaign. It was the combination of these two factors which cemented my break with Labour — through study I moved away from reformism and Bennism, and through practical politics I rid myself of the illusion of being able to transform the Labour Party into any kind of revolutionary organisation. As is often the case, I left the Labour Party without any clear idea of where to go next.

I had had a sympathy for the CPGB during my time as a Bennite — I had read the *British Road to Socialism*, with an embarrassing degree of agreement, and I even

swallowed comrade Aaronovitch's *The Road from Thatcherism*. For precisely these reasons, the CPGB was just about the last place I wanted to go after the Labour Party. The politics of the CPGB, leadership and programme, were in no way a qualitative improvement on those of Benn. Being in the Labour Party had immunised me against the dubious charms of *Militant*, *Socialist Organiser*, the IMG etc. In any case, even as a reformist I had been pro-Soviet, and I never had the stomach for standing full-square with Islamic fundamentalists, Afghan feudalists and the CIA against the Red Army, nor linking arms with Reagan, the Pope and Lech Walesa for the overthrow of the PUWP, even if the latter has mishandled the economy and society of Poland lamentably. This ruled out the WRP, SWP, and RCP, too. What options remained then? The NCP refused to face up to the reality of actually existing socialism, and chose to ape the positions of the CPSU rather than try to understand for themselves, regarding this as the highest form of proletarian internationalism. The tiny Maoist or pro-Albanian sects were clearly out of the question. I went to some RCG meetings having been attracted by their anti-imperialism and pro-Sovietism, only to find that they regard the entire white, male working class in Britain as some kind of labour aristocracy, believing that in this they are following Lenin! (The miners were let into the club of the oppressed during the Great Strike, but no convincing argument was presented to explain how these erstwhile labour aristocrats had managed to make this difficult transition).

The group with which I did have a sustained contact was the Sparts. I met one of them at a miners' benefit and had a long period of contact in which our differences were never resolved. The Sparts changed my conception of what Trotskyism is. I still respect their principled defence of the USSR against Cold War provocations and slander — viz KAL 007 and their refusal to join hands with the bourgeoisie over Poland and Afghanistan. However I was never convinced by their position on Ireland — I remember the first time that I came across anyone selling *The Leninist* outside a weekend school organised by the SWP, I was selling *Workers Hammer* and was trying to sound convincing defending the Spart position. Their 'theory' of inter-penetrated peoples runs through many of their international positions serving the function, in the final analysis, of keeping them from supporting those who are actually fighting imperialism, in Palestine as in Ireland. In addition, I feel that Trotsky's theory of the USSR as being a degenerate workers' state, while being correct in its critique of the 'state capitalism' position (in this respect, I still think his *In Defence of Marxism* has much to recommend it) nonetheless ignores the crucial question of the mode of production. They recognise that the working class holds state power, that the mode of production is *not* capitalist, that the bourgeoisie has been expropriated, but refuse to call it by its name — the lower stage of communism of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, socialism in modern parlance. There are other differences — their notion of 'Stalinism' as counterrevolutionary rather than centrist, their hair-splitting over *The Leninist*'s 'With or without the TUC' headline on the general strike and their almost exclusive emphasis on splitting other subjectively revolutionary groups in order to win members, and so on. The level of commitment that they demand of their members and supporters, however, is an

indication of their seriousness, and is an example to the apathy and amateurism of our own Party.

I first came across *The Leninist* when it was a theoretical journal. I think it was issue three; in any case I promptly bought the earlier issues and read every issue since. The articles I found especially instructive were those on Poland and on the BRS. It is through *The Leninist* that I learned of the different factions of the CPGB. What kept me from joining the CPGB earlier was scepticism as to the viability of winning it over to a Leninist programme, and a failure to grasp the centrality of the struggle for the CPGB. That is I shared the basic premiss of all liquidationism — that the CPGB doesn't matter. When I did decide to join the Party, it was not through belief in its programme, and certainly not because I thought the antics of the Chaterites offered any real alternative. However, I was not at all sure of what my relationship should be to your organisation. I have been selling *The Leninist* discreetly among a small circle of friends, but what comes next is not clear to me... but principled opposition as an individual offers no solution; I am a member of the CPGB because I believe that socialism is necessary for the future of mankind, because I believe the transition to socialism can only come through revolution, in which violent clashes with the forces of the bourgeois state — bodies of armed men, in Lenin's phrase — are inevitable, because I believe that the working class will undertake militant struggle, the class struggle against the bourgeois state, and that it is through the development of this class struggle, through giving it the conscious leadership that it needs to be successful, that the revolution will be 'made'.

For this to be possible, I believe it to be necessary to draw together in a revolutionary communist organisation, all the best, most militant and most conscious and revolutionary members of the working class. Finally, I believe that this revolutionary party cannot be built without struggling for revolutionary politics in the major party of the working class movement which claims to be revolutionary and which has links in history and in the present with those parties which have led victorious revolutions — the CPGB. Any attempt to bypass the world communist movement, such as is represented by the various Trotskyite groups, or to choose an organisational split in preference to open ideological debate within the CPGB, such as was the case with the NCP as is the logic of the position of the Chaterites, is no solution to our present situation in which the revolutionary party which we need is lacking.

Yours in comradeship
Robert King
Scotland

Ex-Euro

Any Marxist-Leninist paper prepared to take a stand against feminist opportunism, McLennanite revisionists and centrist dogma can't be all bad. Several years ago, then a Party activist I confess to having had a brief flirtation with Eurocommunism: a reaction to the Soviet Union right or wrong attitude that permeated my branch.

Indeed, when nation wide the New Communist Party exited clutching their signed photos of Uncle Joe I thought my position justified. It is now clear however, quite apart from the fact that a large Stalinist trojan horse remains within the Party, that the cure is worse than the disease.

The so-called Party journal

Marxism Today, is a disgrace, a quagmire of petty bourgeois muddle substituted for class analysis. I am sure many more ex-Party members see your paper as a ray of hope in the darkness. Keep up the good work.

Fraternally yours,
Pete Oldham
Cumbria

Ex-RCPer

I am interested in joining the CPGB. I have written to the London office of the CPGB about details of the Party and they have introduced me to the local branch.

I have not decided whether to join yet. I would only join on the basis that I would work to transform the party into a Marxist-Leninist party.

I would like information about *The Leninist* and any possible contacts around my area.

I have been hanging around the RCP for nearly nine months. Although I agree with a lot they have to say, organisationally I would argue they isolate themselves not only in Britain but also from the parties of the socialist states.

I would appreciate any information.

T R Bayliss
Yorkshire

South Africa

Given the existence of a revolutionary situation in South Africa, it is clear that the position of the white working class is assuming ever greater importance. Indeed, the position of the white working class is under threat for there are now indications that this formerly bribed, corrupted, and "bourgeoisified" strata of the working class is now being affected by the deepening economic crisis within South Africa and is thus becoming "re-proletarianised".

It is thus of the utmost urgency that the liberation forces, and above all the South African Communist Party, seek to win the white working class away from its evolved loyalty to bourgeois nationalist and racist politics, for it is quite possible that this strata may move towards the Conservative party or the HNP and its overt fascism.

We must also, however, look at the political content of the programme and policies of the SACP. While it is true that it stands on the left of the world communist movement, the SACP is left-centrist not a Leninist party, and although it is quite possible that it could lead the masses in an advanced democratic

revolution and then uninterruptedly towards a socialist revolution and a proletarian government, it is also true that the SACP displays a certain tailism towards the ANC and more disturbingly towards the present day South African Father Gapon, Bishop Desmond Tutu. This raises an important question. When the South African proletariat stages its final decisive battle against its bourgeoisie, will the latent reformist tendencies existing within the SACP act as a break on the move from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution?

Even a true Leninist Communist Party would be right in expecting fraternal assistance from countries where the working class has gained state power, and it is because of this most basic element of proletarian internationalism that advanced workers throughout the world look to the Soviet Union and the CPSU to provide finance, revolutionary advice, and above all arms to equip the masses against what is a militarily strong bourgeoisie. To those faint hearts and opportunists who would criticise such aid given by our comrades in the Soviet Union, we should remind them that the revolutionary situation in South Africa is an integral part of the world revolutionary process — South Africa being a weak link in the imperialist chain. So it is of vital importance to the defence of the Soviet Union and for the future revolution in Britain that the revolutionary situation in South Africa is decided in the positive leading to a proletarian government and the weakening of British and world imperialism.

Yours fraternally
Dan Reader
Coventry

Albania

In the November issue of *The Leninist* Albania was described as "desperately poor". This is incorrect in regard to the fact that in the space of forty years the country has been transformed from being a backward feudal society without even a single factory into a self-sufficient society with a strong and expanding industrial base.

The social advancements are also outstanding especially in regard to education. You correctly state that Albania is socialist country. I feel that you should have outlined the major advancements made under the dictatorship of the proletariat and the fact that Albanians have full employment, material security and socialist democracy, rather than giving the impression of insecurity and poverty. I hope you will rectify this as it is likely to have misled a number of readers.

I was impressed with the fact that you rejected the terms 'Stalinist' and 'Khrushchevite'. From this I assume that you also reject the outrageous slanders of 'personality cult' and 'dictator' made against Stalin by Khrushchev in his attempt to consolidate power for the views/tactics he represented in the CPSU. Genuine communists realise that the very idea of a dictator 'ruling' a socialist country is nonsense. For my own information could you please define exactly what you mean by 'centrism'.

You correctly oppose the views expressed by the Albanian Party of Labour in regard to the other socialist countries. However, would you agree that Yugoslavia and China are not socialist but bourgeois-revisionist?

Yours in comradeship
Al Donaldson
Glasgow

Jack Conrad replies:
Compared with the advanced

capitalist countries Albania, like Vietnam, Cuba, Afghanistan etc. is *desperately poor*. This is a fact whatever progress has been made over forty years. Talk of self-sufficiency is all very well but self-sufficiency in what? There is a world economy which is becoming ever more interdependent, those countries which stand aside from the process of integration or are kept out of this process might be self-sufficient but they are also in relative terms *desperately poor* — it can be no other way.

Lenin for example quite rightly always fought to re-integrate the Soviet economy after the terrible disruption caused by the First World War and civil war. Only in this way could the Soviet Union hope to achieve the level of production and technique seen in the advanced capitalist countries: a requisite for the advance to communism. So we don't have much time for idle boasts of self-sufficiency.

Poverty is relative and in relative terms Albania is a poor country. To deny this is to deny reality. As to socialist democracy in Albania: we see little evidence of this. Albania is a very secretive society. But it seems to us that far from there being a flourishing socialist democracy we see the Albanian Party promoting the personality cult of the now dead Enver Hoxha who in his time like Stalin exercised dictatorial powers. To deny this is to desert the real world for that of makebelieve. This would be misleading our readers as would following your stupid suggestion that China and Yugoslavia are "bourgeois-revisionist" whatever that is.

As to centrism. Surely one who so confidently tells us what is correct and incorrect should be telling us. Our readers will know this is nothing but ABC Marxism. Centrism is standing between revolution and reform. In the Second International this was personified by Karl Kautsky whose 'official' Marxism made him the 'Pope' of the world movement of his day. Centrism is by its very nature unstable and shifts sometimes to the right sometimes to the left. Centrism is full of official optimism. It cannot tell the truth, it fears truth, it can never unite its theory with practice and it is always coming out with half-baked declarations which fly in the face of reality.

Poland

Enclosed we send you a call to all organisations of the workers movement in the west launched by several militants from eastern European opposition. Those militants ask all of our movements to organise actions in occasion of the 4th anniversary of Jaruzelski coup, on 13-14 December 1985, for the liberation of all political "Solidarnosc" prisoners.

We think that in the same way as "Solidarnosc" miners and militants have expressed their solidarity with the British miners against Thatcher and Jaruzelski, it would be a very good thing that now the British militants and workers organisations help "Solidarnosc" to free all the Polish militants in jail.

Please keep us informed about all

publications of this call and all actions organised on December 13th.

With our communist greetings
The Executive Committee
of the Fourth International
Paris, France

Jack Conrad replies:

Although we received this letter from the "Fourth International" after their call for action and although this letter was addressed to the "British Communist Party", it does provide us with an opportunity to re-state our position as regards *Solidarnosc*.

Solidarnosc was as Arthur Scargill quite rightly said "anti-socialist" but more than that it was counterrevolutionary. Because of this communists should have no truck whatsoever with "actions" in its defence.

This does not mean that we are uncritical of the politics pursued by the PUWP which created the climate in Poland where millions of workers joined *Solidarnosc* reducing the official unions to a rump in the process. Likewise while we supported the crushing of *Solidarnosc* it must be said that this action was a clear sign as ever there could be of the political bankruptcy of the Polish comrades' centrism.

As to the attempt by the "Fourth International" to equate British miners with the leadership of *Solidarnosc*. This is as dishonest as it is disgraceful. The truth about *Solidarnosc* was vividly illustrated by Walesa himself. During the miners' Great Strike he was canvassed for his opinion. According to him the use of violence by miners was illegitimate (this is from a leader of an organisation plotting bloody counterrevolution) and Mrs Thatcher was to be much admired. Interestingly Mrs Thatcher has returned the complements — something little reported in the Trotskyite press and no wonder.

The Trotskyites despite all their chatter about "unconditional defence" of the socialist countries lined up with counterrevolution in Poland as they have over Afghanistan. And yet these charlatans have the audacity to brand the world communist movement as counter-revolutionary! So friends of the "Fourth International" we reject your call for action in aid of counterrevolutionaries and we say you are hypocrites to send anyone "communist greetings."

WRP

I trust that you will be fully analysing the recent split in the Workers Revolutionary Party and not simply giving us the sensation reports of the dirty carryings on in the WRP in the style of the gutter press. This is of course what the *Morning Star* has done in true superficial fashion. And isn't it ironic that with the Communist Campaign Group getting ready to split from the CPGB the *Morning Star* should be mocking the Trots because of their history of splitting.

Frank Steele
Leeds

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed names and addresses, and certain details.

Land of the Free



I was walking one day in sweet sunny Belfast
When all of a sudden I heard a great blast;
I thought the explosion had risen the street,
But 'twas only the polis liftin' me off me feet.
Says I "Thank ye, sirs!", but I'm sore in the ribs,
And me hand up to God, I'm tellin' no fibs,
In the jail-house I lie, but the thought comfort me
To know that I live in the 'Land of the Free'.

Now I wrote a few letters of the poor folk's distress,
And sealed them and signed them right off to the Press,
So freedom of speech I proudly can boast,
Though me letters, it seems, went astray in the post.
Ach, I'll buy a news-print and me views get around,
Though I'm presently short of — a few million pound,
But delighted I am that these chances should be
For even the poor in the 'Land of the Free'.

Then I went on the 'Broo' and soon did engage
To find meself work at a starvation wage,
But the shop prices rose and the rent it did soar,
And the Boss he dropped dead when I asked him for more;
I scrimped and I saved and I went short of meat,
When to crown it, 'Recession' put me on the street —
I'm now down-and-out, but, sure what's that to me,
When I know that we live in the 'Land of the Free'.

And when the War came, I was first in the queue,
'For Queen and for Country' has aye been my view;
They trained me to murder, they trained me to kill,
And only I copped it, I'd be doing it still;
Conscience and pity I just put on the shelf,
Sent men to their graves and found one for meself —
As the daisies grow o'er me, let me epitaph be
"What's heaven compared to the Land of the Free!"
Roy Henderson
Glasgow

Three funds

Our call for donations to the Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*), the South African Communist Party, as well as *The Leninist* produced a warm response. Over £150 was raised for the CPT (*İS*) and over £100 for the SACP. We ourselves ended with a small surplus in our fund. This is good news for 1986 and bodes well for our ambitious plans. But there must be no let up. We need your money: it is our life blood.



Healy and Banda: the Bill and Ben of the WRP

The WRP school of lies and falsification

The Bandaite Workers Revolutionary Party are saying that because of Gerry Healy their organisation was in danger of becoming a sect. The truth is of course that the WRP has always been a sect and an anti-communist, anti-Marxist and anti-Soviet one at that.

AS THE dust settles after the split in the Workers' Revolutionary Party and the torrent of revelations, there stand two WRPs, two International Committees of the Fourth International, two *New Lines*, and two *Young Socialists*, all claiming to be the 'real thing'. The 'official' Bandaite *News Line* is in trouble and has become so cash strapped that it has been forced to go from being a daily to a twice weekly like its Healyite 'official' *doppelgänger*. And being twice weekly is not the only thing the two *News Lines* have in common. The only immediate visual difference in their layout, design, and presentation is that the 18p price of the Bandaite paper is black while the 18p price of the Healyite one is red.

Since the bombshell news of the expulsion of the 'Old Man' of British Trotskyism from the WRP hit the streets it has been good knockabout stuff. Every issue of the Bandaite *News Line* carries yet more scandal, innuendo, and denunciations of their ex-great founder/leader and their old comrades who constituted a majority on the WRP Political Committee and the Editorial Board of *News Line*. The charges of sexual abuses against Healy made headline news in the gutter press and might have even temporarily boosted the sales of the flailing *News Line*, which is looking oblivion in the face now that big money members such as jet setter Vanessa Redgrave have gone with Healy along with lucrative international contacts with the likes of Iran and Libya.

But is there more behind the WRP bust-up than what the Banda WRP now calls the degeneracy of one, Gerry Healy? The WRP General Secretary, Mike Banda, originally charged retired WRP General Secretary Healy with "(abusing) the position of authority and respect he enjoyed in the movement." Healy, it was tantalisingly claimed, "used his power for personal gratification" (*News Line* October 25 1985). On October 30 more details emerged of the exact nature of this "gratification". Apparently it involved "repeated sexual assaults on women members" and "cruel and systematic debauchery". The Bandaite then further accused Healy of more expressly political crimes namely of having become "almost entirely preoccupied with developing unprincipled relations with bourgeois nationalist leaders and with trade union and Labour Party reformists in Britain."

This is certainly true. From denouncing Libya's Colonel

Gadaffi in the early 70s as a "fascist", the WRP moved to uncritical adulation of the nationalist leader, rumoured by many in the know to be an important factor behind the daily appearance of *News Line* and its liberal use of full colour pictures. Similarly, the WRP and *News Line* became uncritical cheerleaders for Scargill, Knight, and Livingstone, even when the latter sold out the Labourite 'hard left' in order to cuddle up to Kinnock.

So long time WRP leaders like Banda and Cliff Slaughter denounce not only Healy himself, but the very politics they so vehemently espoused over many, many years. Clearly there is more to the split in the WRP than the lecherous mind and roving hands of the (Dirty) Old Man.

A picture has emerged of Healy as an able organiser, but a political philistine who mystified and grossly distorted what he called "Marxist dialectics" into an almost religious cult in order to cover and justify the Byzantine twists and machinations of rotten Trotskyite political practice. It is now claimed by Healy's erstwhile political collaborators that the WRP's extreme opportunism is due to Healy and the supposed fact that alongside his politics "his personal lifestyle underwent a corresponding degeneration." But we communists should not look for the cause of the WRP's obscene opportunism purely in the mind and consciousness of Thomas Gerald Healy, however warped, but in the nature of the Trotskyite movement itself. What other conclusion can Marxists come to?

Hypocrisy

Point number one. This whole affair exposes the dirty and lying hypocrisy of the very people who have kicked out Healy and his cohorts. Healy and Banda were the Bill and Benn of the WRP. Not only did they make about as much sense to listen to, they were equally inseparable in the eyes of the political public and the WRP membership itself. Now we have allegations of sexual abuse and bureaucratic atrocity which seem to us frighteningly true. After all, as the Bandaite *News Line* itself points out: "Healy and Redgrave made their names as the most trigger-happy litigants in the British labour movement." (November 5 1985) If these allegations are, as the Healyites claim, "the vilest slanders and the most unscrupulous smears", where are the writs which, given the history of Redgraves, brother and sister,

should now be showering down on the heads of Banda and co.? The silence, except on the question of property rights, of Vanessa's top notch solicitors speak volumes.

Given the sexual abuses and bureaucratic regime in the WRP (which are said to go back at least since 1963) how can the Bandaite turn round now after all those years of the closest political collaboration with Healy and claim innocence? So are Healy's practices being used as part of a narrow faction fight? Have the revelations have been wheeled out because they are useful politically, not because Healy has all of a sudden been caught with his pants down?

History

Throughout his time as the Mr Big of The Club/SLL/WRP, Healy personified in many ways the key problems that characterise British Trotskyism; his career also reflects the sordid and tortured course of world Trotskyism. Ever since its inauspicious birth the so-called Fourth International has been deformed and it has degenerated ever since. Adaption to social democracy, isolation, sectarianism, irrelevancy, and interminable splitting have plagued it and its affiliates.

In the late 1940s with his then collaborator, Lawrence, Healy carried out the line of "deep entryism" into the Labour Party. This entryism was the result of Trotskyism's complete isolation from the working class and congenial drift towards social democracy. This move into the Labour Party was justified by constructing a hocus pocus theory that the Labourite left was evolving into centrism. Trotskyites, it could then be conveniently argued, must unite with and assist this development.

Having written off the world vanguard of the working class organised in the world communist movement as counterrevolutionary, the Trotskyites had only one option if they were to overcome their isolation in Britain and internationally: orientate themselves towards and then join the genuinely counter-revolutionary parties of the old Second International. In the 1930s membership of these parties was meant to be a short lived affair but twenty years later the tactic was turned into a strategy.

In many instances, given the power of bourgeois society and the pressures of attempting to swim in the social democratic swamp the Trotskyites began, chameleon like, to take on the colouration of their surroundings. So moving into the Labour Party was not simply an organisational question, but one of political adaption to bourgeois society, the most graphic example being Ted Grant's RSL now better known as *Militant*.

Although Healy never went as far as *Militant* his group did cease all public work for a time. In place of stating their views openly Healy's group took on the code name of 'The Club'. 'The Club' published a 'broad left' paper called *Socialist Outlook* around which they gathered a loose periphery of Labour MPs and trade union bureaucrats.

Outlook

Clandestine work in the Labour Party continued for some years. Even when in 1954 the Labour Party leadership proscribed *Socialist Outlook* Healy ordered his group to sell *Tribune*. It was only in the wake of the 1956 events in Hungary that Healy was tempted out of his deep entryist subterranean existence. With the CPGB racked by internal dissent and large numbers of disaffected intellectual elements looking for a home, Healy made his move to raid the CPGB.

'The Club' was reorientated and a new paper *The Newsletter* (again like *Socialist Outlook* disdaining to express its views openly) was laun-

ched. It won a couple of hundred ex-CPers, and on this basis Healy gave the go ahead for the formation of the Socialist Labour League in 1957. Although this step away from deep entryist politics did not at first go hand in hand with honesty about the Trotskyite politics of its leadership the SLL step by step revealed its true nature and step by step lost most of its ex-CP membership.

To get membership figures up, to keep the raw recruits on the boil and in the League and after the Labour leadership closed down the SLL dominated Young Socialists to survive outside the Labour Party Healy conjured up a vision of imminent revolution and the distinct possibility of fascist or military coup. Indeed, this was the staple diet of Healyism throughout the existence of the SLL and its transformation into the WRP in 1973. But along with the leftist catastrophism and rabid sectarianism, Healy added a profoundly right opportunist adaptation to bourgeois nationalist leaders as well as the usual Trotskyite fare of fawning before certain left social democrats.

So it is clear that Healy's political pronouncements, no matter how dressed up in theoretical obscurantism, have always tailed and been designed to serve the particular organisational tactic of the moment. Given this shallowness it should hardly surprise us that the WRP has always been characterised by a sectarianism which is blatantly used for the purpose of keeping green recruits on a drug-like high and out of the way of other political influences and a thoroughly L.s.d. opportunist seeking after financial reward through courting everyone in the 'Arab nation', from the blood-stained Iraqi Ba'athists to the PLO.

Rank and filism

The Healyites, now fronted by Corin and Vanessa Redgrave and ex-Fleet Street journalist Alex Mitchell, accuse the Bandaite of having: "rejected dialectical materialism in favour of subjective idealism; violated the constitution, flagrantly replaced it with rank and filism, freedom of criticism, and rule from below."

The complaint about rejecting dialectical materialism rings hollow. The WRP never, except in words, adhered to dialectical materialism in the first place. The WRP has always, as we have shown, operated on the most crudely subjective and idealist basis. Its constant ravings about a revolutionary situation, its bluster about Bonapartism, and its vile hatred of the world communist movement brand it as irredeemably anti-communist and non-Marxist.

Of course, such abstract and idealist theory, while it might be designed to justify a particular turn and keep the naive working their guts out for the 'party', could not remain unaffected by the real world. The social peace of the post-World War II boom allowed Healy to construct his cult in splendid isolation, but come the upsurge in the class struggle belief in the fantasy world could only be sustained by those whose point of reference is Shaftesbury Avenue, the Old Vic, or Broadway. The miners' Great Strike in particular shattered the claims of Trotskyites like Healy that they were leading the party.

The WRP's uselessness to the working class was mercilessly shown up by the strike and its aftermath. The 'party' refused to take part in the mass movement centred on the Miners' Support Committees, preferring instead to build "soviet-type community councils" which of course only consisted of WRP members, who represented no one and effected nothing. From having used the bourgeois media to line up Arthur Scargill for the right's anti-Soviet witchhunt with his "revelation" that *Solidarnosc* was "anti-socialist" at the 1983 TUC, *News Line* took an uncritical position towards the NUM leadership

(except those in the CPGB) never once daring to go beyond its interminable and unchanging cry of "TUC off your knees — organise the general strike" even when it was patently obvious that the TUC was bent on selling the NUM down the river.

The WRP's pathetic failure to affect the strike, let alone lead the revolution, could only bring home to the supposed "ten thousand fighters for Trotskyism" (more likely to have been well under one thousand) that something was amiss. Sensing that leaders like Banda were seeking to ride on the wave of discontent, Healy was, it is said, preparing a purge. But Banda outplayed the 'Old Man' at his own game and carried out a palace coup which ended in Healy himself and his closest followers on the editorial board of *News Line* and most Equity members being given the push. Having done this of course Banda was left with a problem. What was the WRP without Healy and how to prevent Healy taking most of the membership with him?

Banda has attempted to solve this conundrum by latching onto protests about Healy's alleged sexual crimes and ridiculing the gulf that now stands between reality and the pompous and absurd claims *News Line* has been making for years. Since the purge the Bandaite *News Line* has been churning out lurid details of Healy's personal life along with various documents submitted for the 'party's' Eighth Congress by both sides. Given the fact that the Healyites have sought like grim death to maintain fidelity to the loopy positions of the WRP's Seventh Congress, the Bandaite reckoned that they were on to a winner.

So while Healyites like ex-Deputy General Secretary Sheila Torrance declared that: "The Seventh Congress resolution was correct. We have entered into a revolutionary situation" (*News Line* November 5 1985), the Bandaite not wanting to look a gift horse in the mouth exposed the obvious fact that no such situation exists today. Of course in the zany world of the WRP this was dressed up in rhetoric about there being a "period of transition" to a revolutionary situation. And all this was buttressed and made 'orthodox' by lavish quotes from Trotsky himself from the 1930s about basing oneself "on the facts of today and not tomorrow", as if this should need stating in the first place. Banda also took great delight in quoting Healy's assessments about the miners' Great Strike, not least his belief that "a return to work would be a catastrophic defeat for the working class and render fascism inevitable" (*News Line* October 30 1985).

Such outlandish statements were it is true typical of Healy, but what about Banda? The Bandaite WRP still claims that the NUM were not defeated, that Britain is in the transition period to a revolutionary situation and that while Thatcher is not out and out a Bonapart she is heading towards Bonapartism. In other words, if Healy is crazy Banda is half crazed.

What now?

Banda might have broken with Healy, but can he break with Healyism? It seems improbable. After all, Healy founded and directed what became the WRP for decades. His disciple and right hand was none other than Mike Banda — his chosen successor as WRP General Secretary. Indeed Healy's political stamp is unalterably imprinted onto the WRP in terms of its politics and practice. For example, Banda might now be attacking the WRP's support for the execution of 21 Iraqi communists by the Ba'ath regime, the WRP's photographing of Communist Party of Iraq members for the Iraqi embassy in return, it is said, for cash payments and the fingering of at least one Iraqi

communist for execution back home. But has his wing of what is left of the WRP admitted their role in these crimes? The answer is no!

What about Healy's alleged sexual assaults on women WRP members which are said to go back to 1963? Surely Banda must have known all about them for ages and the fact that Healy's alleged victims numbered more than 20; if so, why wait until 1985 to expose Healy as a rapist? What about the revolutionary situation which apparently goes back to 1976, the Bonapartist regime, and all that nonsense? Why wait until 1985 to voice disagreement?

The answer is, as we have indicated, plain as a pikestaff: faction fighting in the WRP made it advantageous, perhaps even vital, to spill the beans on Healy going right back to the beginning of his long career and expose him for the charlatan he is. But where does this leave the Bandaite WRP?

For us, Healy's personal degeneration is a side issue. The violence, corruption, and sectarianism are not the product of one individual but of the WRP and the Trotskyite movement as a whole. An abortion to begin with it was faced with a stark choice: either the swamp of social democracy and the warmth of anti-Soviet, pro-Labourite respectability or the sectarian wilderness. Healy chose, albeit after some dithering, the latter. The result was inevitable. Having no grasp whatsoever of Marxist-Leninist theory let alone principle, only a rude ambition for the big time, the SLL/WRP/Young Socialists ate up raw recruits in the name of the revolution only to spit them out after the cult had burnt them out; the mirage of power was

possible with a ready source of money in rich actors and actresses as well as Middle Eastern regimes; but the reality was shabby, sordid and doomed to disintegrate at the first whiff of serious class struggle.

Sincere revolutionaries who joined the WRP have been led up the garden path, first by Healy and now by Banda. They were schooled in Healyite lies, falsifications, and distortions and now Bandaite self-excuses and self-justifications. Far from being trained to act as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, WRP activists were, and are, used and abused. They have been poisoned against every revolutionary trend in the workers' movement, above all the world communist movement. For while the genuinely counterrevolutionary Labourites are painted as unconscious counterrevolutionaries, the world communist movement is always singled out as being consciously counterrevolutionary.

Thus, while the WRP praised the butcher Khomeini in Iran, feted the backtracking Arafat PLO, and ignored the treachery of Livingstone the CPGB and all other communist parties were spat upon, attacked, and slandered in the pages of *News Line*.

Having broken with Healy, we call upon the many honest members of the politically naked Bandaite WRP to break with the Trotskyism that gave birth to Healyism in the first place. Take another look at the world communist movement and the fight to reforge the CPGB. This is the key task that genuine revolutionaries must confront today: it is a task that will not go away, whatever Trotsky said.

Alec Long

'MILITANT'



Liverpool's *Militant* dominated council proved no different from other Labourite councils

KINNOCK is determined to witch-hunt supporters of *Militant* not only in Liverpool but throughout the country. And why pick on *Militant* and not *Socialist Organiser* or *Socialist Action* etc.

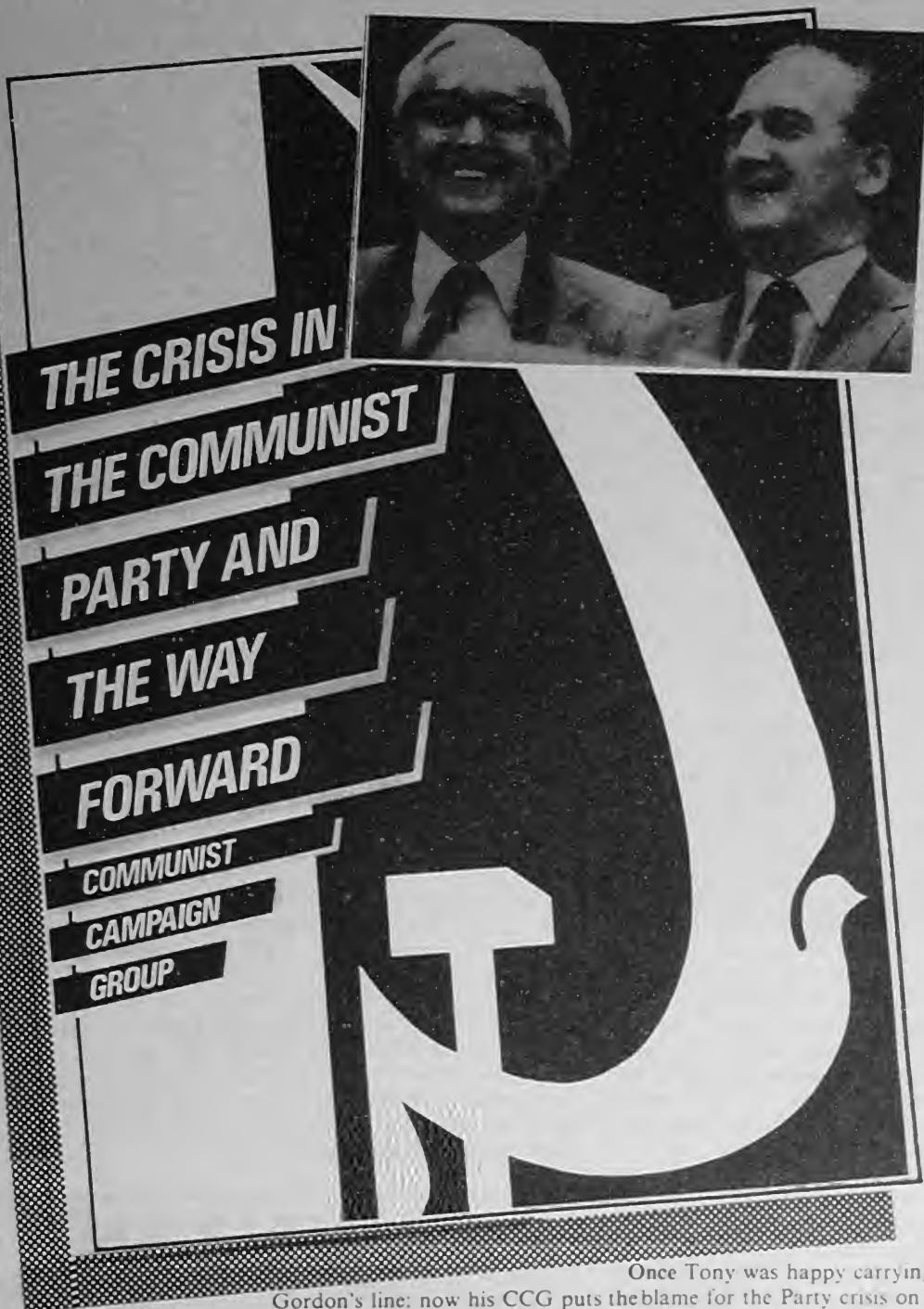
Unlike the WRP Ted Grant's Trotskyite sect remained committed to a deep entryist strategy. In fact from starting with the absurd idea that they could stay in the Labour Party winning a mass base in order to split the party when a revolutionary situation emerged *Militant* has ended up like so many other Trotskyites as nothing less than the left wing of left Labourism. And if we look at their position on Ireland, the miners' Great Strike, the Falklands War and racism, there are a few left Labourites to the left of them.

Today the leaders of *Militant* say that the "bourgeois party of the working class" as Lenin called the Labour Party can become the instrument to bring socialism to Britain. So social democratised have they become that like the *British Road* they think that socialism will be ushered in by an act of parliament.

So why is Kinnock determined to purge these particular Labourised Trots? The answer is simple. For the Tories and the Tories' press, *Militant* has been used as a stick to beat the Labour Party, not any of the other 57

varieties of Labour Party card carrying followers of Leon Trotsky. In classic aspiring Prime Minister style Kinnock has attempted to stop these attacks by showing that he loathes the left-wing of his party more than the Tories. This of course is partially true. All Labour leaders have hated the left Labourites, but then all Labour leaders at the same time need their left-wing to secure the loyalty of working class militants. So while Kinnock will attack *Militant*, rail against "alien elements" and engineer disciplinary measures all to prove his trustworthiness to the bosses and their system, he still needs sincere leftists duped by *Militant* to run the party's creaking machinery, staff the LPYS and rally the voters at election times.

Because the Labour Party dominates the workers' movement in Britain, because it is a workers' party albeit with a bourgeois programme and leadership, what goes on inside it is no private affair. It is the concern of all workers especially the communists. But while defending *Militant* from the Kinnock witch-hunt we must constantly expose the Labour Party as a whole for what it is: a tool of the ruling class. Only in this way can we break the Labour Party's mass base from its bourgeois leadership and their Trotskyite lap-dogs.



Once Tony was happy carrying out Gordon's line; now his CCG puts the blame for the Party crisis on him.

Open letter

The Communist Campaign Group has just launched its first pamphlet. This pamphlet has the status of the CCG's manifesto and raises some very important questions which its leadership must answer.

Dear Comrades,
If, as Lenin said, "honesty in politics is a sign of strength," it must be admitted that your recently published pamphlet *The Crisis in the Communist Party and the Way Forward* shows just how weak you really are. It claims to "map out a general perspective both on the nature of the present threat to the Communist Party and on the approach needed to combat it." This is a worthy aim and an ambitious one for a pamphlet with only ten A5 pages of very spaced out type. But frankly, it fails abysmally.

The truth is that this pamphlet exposes your theoretical shallowness, your brazen hypocrisy, and worst of all your cynical manipulation of those whom you lead. As if this were not enough, your efforts show all the signs of inconsistency, half truth, and downright lies which comes from attempting to stitch together the essentially disparate tendencies that go to make up your Frankenstein monster of a grouping.

You seem to locate the origins of the crisis that grips the CPGB today not in the contradictions, internal and external, that have developed in our Party since it was formed, but in 1982. Indeed, you trivialise the

whole complex question by placing responsibility for much of the present crisis at the feet of comrade Gordon McLennan. According to you, he "cannot be absolved from the blame for the present crisis. He and his associates must bear a heavy responsibility for what has come to pass. Since 1982 especially he has allowed both himself and the Executive Committee to come under the total domination of the Eurocommunist faction." (p.1)

Has your decision to anchor the Party crisis firmly in 1982 anything to do with the fact that until that year leaders of your group, such as Mick Costello and of course Tony Chater himself, were in political cahoots with comrade McLennan? Whether or not this is the case it just goes to show your complete failure to understand that the crisis we see today must, if we are to be at all consistent, be traced back to at least the mid-1930s. Certainly the adoption of the first *British Road to Socialism* in 1950, with its commitment to achieve socialism via the Labour Party and the bourgeois parliament, made the present liquidationist crisis inevitable. After all, why have a Communist Party at all if socialism will be obtained through Labour Party govern-

ments?

Other oppositionists have, like you, subjectively put the starting of the Party's crisis at the precise point where the fell out with the dominant tendency in the leadership. For the Straight Leftists it was 1968 (though some elements in this faction are now thankfully plucking up the courage to voice differences with the 1950 draft *BRS*) while the New Communist Party plumps for 1966 for equally metaphysical reasons. Because of this the Straight Leftists in the guise of the 'Charlie Woods' pamphlet manage to detect 'revolutionary' content in the pre-1968 *BRSs*, and the NCP has a good word for all *BRSs* until the 1977 draft, a document which though then still in draft form was used as the pretext for its split. This does not stop the NCP making overtures to you who claim to be the true defenders of this revisionist programme.

Now, there is nothing irredeemably wrong in realising the danger posed to our CPGB by revisionism, no matter how late in the day one comes to this conclusion. But once having realised the danger, those who claim the mantle of Marxism-Leninism should scientifically examine the hows and whys of the revisionist growth.

Any honest worker reading the various editions of the *BRS* would come to the conclusion that there has been an uninterrupted and straight path from the 1950 draft *BRS* to the present 1978 edition. All have exactly the same approach to central questions such as the state, parliament, and democracy. All deny the need for smashing the bourgeois state and replacing it with new proletarian forms of state power such as soviets. Indeed, all deny the need for revolution.

The reason for this is easily explained. All drafts, all editions are based on a reformist outlook and a dewy-eyed commitment to bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Those who justify their role in helping to write the *BRS* or their acquiescing in its thoroughly reformist positions have no right to call themselves Marxist-Leninists. Certainly those like you in the CCG who proclaim that they "defend and promote" the 1978 *BRS* can have little to do with fighting opportunism, simply because you suffer from that very disease.

Facts have to be faced: the 1978 *BRS* is both revisionist and opportunist. In Britain this inexorably leads to liquidationism for a Communist Party, given the powerful magnetic pull exerted by the bourgeois party of the working class, as Lenin rightly called the Labour party. So while your pamphlet points to many of the problems experienced by our Party today, it and you are not part of the solution but part of the problem.

The truth of this can be seen in your theoretical poverty, your loyalty to the utterly revisionist 1978 *BRS*, and your crude attempt to equate the working class as a whole with the venal trade union and Labour Party tops, upon whom the *Morning Star* never tires of heaping praise and adulation.

But if it were simply a question of opportunism in the realm of philosophy then, although our polemic would be fierce, through frank discussion and unity in action we would have every reason to hope for an honest and principled coming together. Tragically, though, despite attacking the Eurocommunists for liquidationism you have qualitatively gone way beyond even the most rabid supporter of *Marxism Today* in undermining our CPGB.

Your pamphlet makes the pretence of defending our Party, but the fact is that in practice you are acting like the Judas goat. You are leading you supporters not into opposition against revisionism and liquidationism (you are, after all, guilty of both) but out of the Party and into a suicidal NCP Mark II based on the revisionism and opportunism enshrined in the 1978 *BRS*.

That your pamphlet says nothing of this is the reason for our calling into question your political honesty. We have spoken to prominent supporters of yours in private. They unashamedly admit that a split is inevitable and, what is more, desirable. We have no ulterior motive to invent such stories, but you have an interest in denying the truth of your intentions, so it seems. And you obviously follow the dictum that if you are going to lie one might as well tell a whopper. One page six of your pamphlet you maintain that the CCG supports the rules of the Party. This is a lie. On page eight you say the CCG defends the "principles of Marxism-Leninism". This is a lie. And on page ten you have the temerity to claim that the CCG "is not a faction". Perhaps the biggest lie of the lot.

Your CCG has its own (undeclared) aim of forming a new party, and the declared aim of operating "a dual structure in the Communist Party" and creating "two poles of authority and organisation". (p.7) It has its own publications, finances, and leadership (presumably self-appointed). So you are factionalists who haven't even the honesty to admit it. And you are hypocritical

factionalists.

On page ten you have the gall to launch an attack on the Straight Leftists. Naturally there is nothing wrong with having differences with the Straight Leftists. We do, and have often voiced our profound differences with these comrades. But to attack them for factionalism because they have "their own newspaper, their own organisation, and their own objectives" is staggering, coming as it does from you, the factionalists of the CCG.

This shoddy, dishonest approach is typical of your entire political method. You prattle on a lot about "the achievements of the socialist countries" and their progressive foreign policy, and yet you make no indication of your position on recent events in Poland and Afghanistan. It is known that Chater, Hicks, and Costello sided with the Euros they now so love to damn. Have they changed their position or has the CCG decided not to debate such crucial matters of international politics?

What about what you call the "domestic front"? On page three you mention in passing the jailed and victimised miners and rightly criticise comrade Pete Carter for his not wanting to "burden" Kinnock and "the next Labour government" with their cause. And yet in the *Morning Star* these martyrs hardly get a look in. The paper you laud to the sky has not launched a campaign on their behalf and no reports are carried about prison conditions.

Indeed, the *Morning Star* has done its best to split the intimately related issues of those sacked and those imprisoned. Proof of the lack of principle of those leading the CCG came at last year's PPPS AGM when a principled motion backing those victimised and jailed was voted down along with another principled motion calling for support for the Irish national liberation struggle.

Given this, we will fight tooth and nail against your crude Trojan horse attempt to wheel out the so-called 'lesser of two evils' theory. You oppose Eurocommunism; this is true. But what the working class in Britain today needs is not simply opposition to Eurocommunism. What it needs is an effective strategy for socialist revolution. In this the greatest obstacles to be overcome will be those of social democracy in all its forms and opportunism.

The CCG does not have a strategy of overcoming social democracy, but it does have one of integrating itself into the mainstream social democratic tradition in Britain. This is undoubtedly as opportunist as it is liquidationist. If we look at the inner-Party struggle through the restricted and distorting prism of anti-Eurocommunism alone we will get nowhere. On the other hand, if the scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism is employed we get different results, not least because our vision is clear, our perspective longterm and revolutionary.

Leninists are out to build a Communist Party which will lead the proletariat in Britain to the conquest of state power. To do this we will have to overcome Eurocommunism, as we will Straight Leftism, Chaterism, and of course Labourism, left and right. Eurocommunism might well be a particularly ripe form of opportunism, but the same can be said of the Chaterism of the CCG. We set our sights not simply on a non-Euro Communist Party, but on a Leninist Communist Party.

This cannot be achieved by some pro-*Morning Star* NCP Marx II, which is in any case doomed to disaster, not least because of its ideologically heterogeneous make up. No, only a vigorous, unyielding, and relentless ideological struggle against all forms of opportunism can equip the working class with the sort of Communist Party the future demands.

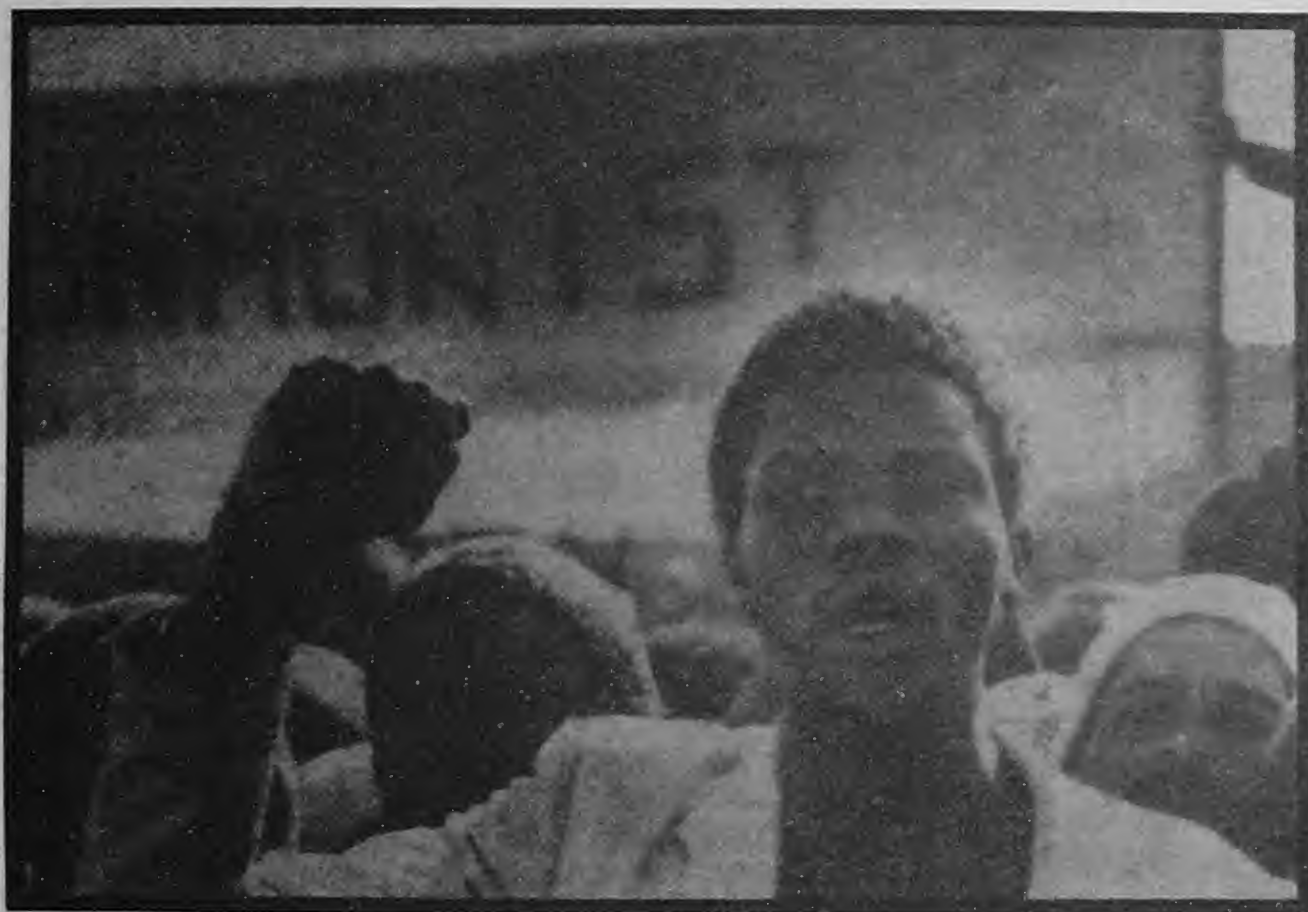
David Sherrif

THE LENINIST SUPPLEMENT

Crisis in South Africa

Section 3

SOLIDARITY WITH THE REVOLUTION



THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT is at a crossroads. It can carry on along the road of trying to pressurise the government and attempting to emulate the CND. This highway is paved with good intent, but is ultimately doomed to disappointment because it will only follow the safe contours of bourgeois respectability.

But where do the alternatives lead? The Revolutionary Communist Group wants to take the AAM down the well-trod path of radical protest politics which looks upon the workers' movement with contempt. This is a slippery slope which finishes up in the impotent and self justifying wilderness where dwells the likes of the Irish Solidarity Movement, an RCG front which has been deserted by even its most parasitic bedmates.

There is a third route. This is the road of militant class struggle. It is steep and full of dangers; but at its end lies not only a liberated South Africa but fertile conditions for the struggle for socialism in Britain. Instead of having the Free South Africa Movement in the USA as its model it aspires to the Hands Off Russia Campaign, which saw overtly political strike action, the formation of Councils of Action, and the threat of a general strike from the TUC. If the AAM can be won to set its sights on this aim it will of course mean ditching attempts to court Tory opinion and breaking with

Liberal MPs, C of E clerics, and the craving for respectability that goes with them. But this is what the situation in Britain demands: 100,000 have already taken to the streets of London against apartheid and workers have shown willingness to engage in industrial action to prevent trade with South Africa. Even more importantly, the rapidly maturing revolutionary situation in South Africa itself cries out for the most determined, hard hitting, and effective solidarity.

There are some who fear the sheer determination, zest, and energy of the spontaneous anger that exists against apartheid. These elements will want the AAM to denounce those who are prepared to meet police attack with popular resistance. Of the same mould are those who insist that campaigns should be "expressly against the use of physical violence". And if these types fail to achieve their ends by bureaucratic methods they prevent debate in and direct action by the AAM with bannings, innuendo, and expulsions.

Such methods have been employed to the full against the RCG. Many attacks on the RCG and the City Anti-Apartheid Group have indeed been at the level of gutter politics. Now we have important differences with the RCG which we do not hide. But we present our arguments in an open and, we hope, honest fashion. This cannot be said about many others, who, not content with

standing aside from the City AA picketing campaign, extend their differences to the point of expelling the City Group and anti-democratic subterfuge.

The City AA in our view is open to political criticism, but its long hard fight outside South Africa House, its mobilisation of many thousands (most new to politics) and its members' willingness to suffer brutal attacks by the police are to be highly praised. As to the attacks on comrade David Kitson, which are connected to those on the City AA: these attacks are nothing but opportunist mud slinging which should have no place in the workers' movement. Comrade Kitson spent 20 years in apartheid's prisons, he and his family have been outstanding activists against apartheid; principled disagreement is one thing, disgusting lies another.

Such bureaucratic approaches are very dangerous. Unless they are overcome there is a distinct possibility of the AAM itself being bypassed by the elemental power of a nascent mass movement. Bannings, innuendo, and expulsions must be ended if the AAM is not to be reduced to a rump.

We should remember that this happened to the rather stodgy peace campaigns of the 1950s when the CND exploded onto the scene; the official movement against US involvement in Vietnam was likewise circumvented in the late '60s by the Vietnam

Solidarity Campaign; and the small but 'broad' committees against the National Front were quickly and effortlessly overshadowed by the energetic Anti-Nazi League in the '70s. So while it is correct to pay tribute to the sterling work done by the AAM over many long years, its leadership of the solidarity movement with the South African masses must be earned at every stage and is far from being god given.

During periods of relative quietness inside South Africa the AAM has rightly concentrated its efforts on what could be called patient diplomatic work. The needs of the liberation movement for safe havens, friends in high places, and cultivating democratic opinion had to and did take priority. In such times it is more a question of the unrewarding task of keeping the movement's wheels turning than coping with contending perspectives and giving teeth to the anger of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, who are asking what they can do to help topple the apartheid monster. But all methods of work have their time and place, and the new circumstances which we see today necessitate new methods and tactics.

The emphasis the AAM has placed on parliamentary lobbying and securing bishops and Liberal MPs onto its platforms should now therefore give way to a much more militant approach of mobilising mass

actions, such as organising political strikes; this requires above all digging roots in the working class. And hand in hand with stressing the urgency of the AAM going from the bottom gear of routine work to the top gear of mass involvement, mass impact, and mass action, we must come to see solidarity work with the masses in South Africa as an integral component part of class politics in Britain and the world as a whole.

As communists in Britain our aim in building the AAM is firstly to advance the world wide struggle against imperialism. Intimately linked to this is the weakening of pro-imperialist ideas over the minds of the working class in Britain. The extent to which we are successful in doing this will determine how successful we are in generating solidarity that has clout. Certainly the greatest service we can do for the victims of British imperialism and for the cause of the world revolution is to overthrow the British capitalist state, something which of course relies on the working class shedding all illusions in their having interests in common with British imperialism.

Because we fully appreciate that as things stand at the moment it is South Africa which is gripped by a revolutionary situation and not Britain, we must seek to inculcate our working class with the spirit and rich lessons of a living revolution all the better to make our own. We have a direct and vital interest in the overthrow of apartheid. If it can be smashed and replaced by the rule of the working class and its allies this would be a body blow against our main enemy which is British imperialism. A proletarian order in South Africa would not only be a cause for celebration, but would make our revolution that much sooner, that much easier, and that much more certain.

Therefore, in our work to aid the black masses in South Africa we are not concerned in the least to overcome British imperialism's "isolation in the international community" nor its "disgrace" because of Thatcher's intransigent stance on sanctions as the *Morning Star* obsessively is. No, our perspective rests on fighting for the world revolution which will see British imperialism isolated, disgraced, and destroyed.

1. The dangers of tailism

The backwardness of politics in the workers' movement in Britain, the decline of the Communist Party, and the existence of an array of organisationally weak aspiring replacements has led to most solidarity work with South Africa and other oppressed countries being characterised by tailism. And far from this opportunism being disguised it is proudly proclaimed as a virtue.

So as well as there being those British communists who have concocted the erroneous theory that it is 'unprincipled' to criticise communists operating in other countries (see Section II of this study in *The Leninist* No.25), there are those who extend this unprincipled 'principle' to include liberation movements. Of course this is an 'ideal' based on metaphysics, not Marxism.

This explains why in practice this 'principle' is applied selectively by all its proponents with full regard to what they consider safe and what they consider beneficial to their narrow interests. In truth, this supposed 'principle' is therefore nothing but a shabby excuse to abstain from the nuisance of presenting a reasoned argument and to avoid the very real possibility of being proved wrong.

Because this 'they know best' approach is applied selectively we find that the Chinese, Albanian, Spanish, Italian, and other non-mainstream communist parties are rubbished, while mainstream parties are deemed beyond criticism no matter what mistakes they make, no matter how overt their opportunism may be. When it comes to national liberation movements we find similar selectivity.

The Irish liberation movement is viciously slandered by the very same selective 'thou shalt not criticise' critics who insist that we all "follow the lead of SWAPO and the ANC". We thus find the paradoxical situation where the IRA is condemned more or less outright while the MK guerrillas in South Africa are feted as heroes. And while the IRA is sometimes dismissed as being 'elitist' and always held responsible for alienating public opinion in Britain, supposedly making it impossible to build solidarity with the cause of Irish freedom, the ANC is praised for its armed struggle, even though this now also includes 'soft targets'.

The ANC is never ticked off with charges of 'elitism' for supporting Umkhonto we Sizwe, let alone warned about the incorrectness of terrorism. And although the IRA and Sinn Fein are invariably blamed for deepening and sometimes causing the split in the working class of the Six Counties, when it comes to the undoubted split in the South African working class it is apartheid not the liberation movement which is considered the cause — and quite rightly.

Now, we are fully aware that while the above description of inconsistency fits some, such as the Straight Leftists, the *Morning Star* and its Communist Campaign Group, as well as the Labour leadership and a host of other right opportunists, there are many variations on the theme.

For example, the RCG on 'principle' will not criticise the ruling parties in the socialist countries, claiming that non-criticism amounts to solidarity in the face of the imperialist threat. Despite this, the RCG regularly carries tirades against communist parties in the capitalist world in its paper: an inconsistency it resolves in ostrich fashion by head in the sand refusal to even admit that the world communist movement exists.

When it comes to national liberation movements the RCG again considers it a 'principle' not to criticise. But true to its Trotskyite origins it has taken its denial of the objective reality of the world communist movement to the point where it does not appear to mention communist parties in the oppressed countries even when they are integral to a liberation movement. So when dealing with South Africa it totally ignores the South African Communist Party, all the while on 'principle' steadfastly refusing to even express any preference between the ANC and the black separatist PAC lest they slip into 'chauvinism'.

Mercifully the RCG does not take its Little England worship of anti-imperialist spontaneity to the absurd conclusion of *Proletarian*. This is a small group which in its four years of existence has only managed to produce two editions of its journal. After working closely with the RCG it now lines itself up with the *Morning Star* in the apparent belief that this is what the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would want it to do. (To prove its god building sycophancy towards the Soviet Party *Proletarian* has pathetically and crudely lifted for its symbol the full Soviet state coat of arms, sheaves of wheat, rising sun, Russian script, and all.) In the clumsy hands of *Proletarian* tailism towards the CPSU has been extended to include liberation movements in receipt of Soviet aid and even some liberation movements like Sinn Fein which are not.

Because it has an obsessive and truly petty bourgeois desire to tail, *Proletarian* has hurled accusations of racism at the RCG like it was going out of fashion. This is apparently a result of the RCG's refusal to copy parrot-like the tactics of various liberation movements when it comes to solidarity work in Britain.

Thus, as the RCG does not consider work in the Labour Party the central plank for building a solidarity movement around Ireland *Proletarian* triumphantly announces that the RCG is "poison to the Irish Solidarity Movement". For the same reason the RCG is also branded as "openly chauvinist" because it maintains that it is not duty bound to accept Sinn Fein's assessments.

One can only wonder what *Proletarian* would do if the IRA was to fall back to the view that the only way to awaken public opinion in Britain to the plight of Ireland was to support indiscriminate bombings. Would *Proletarian* then feel so confident in calling on all and sundry to mimic the lead of the republican movement or would it suddenly discover that this 'principle' had to be applied selectively?

Tailism and arrogant illconsidered flinging of accusations of racism and chauvinism are of course self defeating when it comes to building a serious revolutionary movement. Problems arise for a whole number of reasons. Those whom the tailer seeks to tail might develop differences with each other; in this case the tailer has to make the painful choice of whom to tail; or maybe the tailed might develop a positive dislike for the tailer.

The first category of this can be well illustrated with *Proletarian*. On Ireland it has, for a centrist organisation, a relatively healthy position of support for the democratic struggle of the republican movement. But because this support is

incorrectly, in true idealist fashion, taken to the point of tailism, *Proletarian* is forced to attack the Communist Party of Ireland: a position at odds with the mainstream of the world communist movement which for one reason or another echoes the CPI's criticisms of Sinn Fein. To square the circle *Proletarian* desperately tries to pluck quotes from the CPSU (which according to these god builders is automatically correct) about "Irish freedom fighters". Reality did, as reality will, catch out such charlatans. Having just published *Proletarian* No 2 on Ireland in September 1984, which despite its centrism contained many well aimed and often correct attacks on the CPI's cowardly revisionism as well as carefully selected quotes from *Izvestia* to justify its position, the Brighton bomb went off and exploded the whole elaborately constructed facade. For it was not just the bourgeois media and the likes of the *Morning Star* and comrade Gordon McLennan which lined up to condemn this 'outrage', but the Soviet comrades through the news agency Tass. So *Proletarian* No 2 has egg over its expensive full-colour glossy front cover and all its 80 odd pages. Meanwhile the group is left with the impossible task of fitting the square of the real Soviet position, which it regards as akin to the word of god, into the circle of Sinn Fein's liberation struggle. As with other tailists *Proletarian* has found that the best way to do this is to deny the problem — it at least has the virtue of keeping its motley band of followers happy in splendid ignorance.

For the second category we will use the RCG as our example. Because of its leadership of the dissident and very active City of London Anti-Apartheid Group the RCG has won itself many enemies, not least in the national leadership of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Perhaps as a result of this, liberation movements with close links with the AAM Executive Committee have an axe to grind with the RCG. Certainly when the RCG organised an anti-apartheid rally in Islington on September 23 1985, SWAPO took the unprecedented step of issuing a public statement snubbing it and the RCG. According to it, the RCG is "opportunistic", "underhand", "manipulative", and damaging to "the solidarity movement". Confronted with such a blockbuster from those they wish to tail, the RCG could only manage to cobble together a feeble, typically tailist reply which could only whine on about the attack being a "matter of great regret".

While *Proletarian* in particular revelled in the RCG's discomfiture and used the Islington rally as the occasion for its own rupture with the RCG it is obvious that all tailists are vulnerable to such devastating slaps in the face. For the sake of argument imagine if our Communist Party of Great Britain was reduced to nothing but a Euro rump. Say for one moment the CPSU considered it in its interests to back the Straight Leftists as the legitimate and therefore recognised communist organisation in Britain. If this led to a public rebuke to all the other contenders for Soviet patronage (the NCP, the Communist Campaign Group, and *Proletarian*) the effect would be shattering; after all, obtaining the Soviet seal of approval is considered of central importance if not the main aim of their political life.

2. Solidarity and liberation movements

From what we have said already it should be abundantly obvious that we have little time for those who argue against a particular campaign or course of action with the tired refrain that the ANC/Sinn Fein/SWAPO or whatever does not support it. As we have shown, such tailism is a sign of political weakness, dishonest, inevitably selective, and useless in the fight for world revolution.

What then is the principled communist position? It has always been to recognise that even if it is led by the bourgeoisie it is essential to support it if it fights against the imperialists. Thus, although communists openly declare that they look to the day when the working class in the oppressed countries takes the vanguard role in the liberation struggle, this does not affect our unconditional support for the democratic struggle even if it is headed by non-proletarian forces.

Lenin, it should be remembered, praised amongst others the bourgeois nationalist Sun Yat-sen and the Kuomintang of China. While Lenin never for one moment forgot

the class character of the Kuomintang this never interfered with proletarian aid, advice, and moral support for the democratic content of the Kuomintang programme.

Lenin insisted that to the extent the bourgeois nationalists struggled against imperialism the proletariat should support them. But in so far as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for its own bourgeois nationalism the proletariat should be against them. Thus, support for bourgeois nationalism can only be *conditional* support, simply because the bourgeoisie of every country always strives for its own privileges. So support is only given in a definite direction; it never coincides with the bourgeoisie simply because it has different aims, not least that of creating the best conditions for the class struggle and socialism.

Thus, although in 1912 Lenin could declare that a "militant, sincere spirit of democracy pervades every line of Sun Yat-sen's platform" this was tempered with the understanding that his semi-Narodnik theory was that of a "petty-bourgeois 'socialist' reactionary" who despite this theory is forced by life itself to the conclusion of the necessity of revolution and capitalist development in China. (*CW* Vol.18, pp.164-7)

So Lenin argued for *unconditional* support for the democratic elements of Sun Yat-sen's programme, but only *conditional* support for the Kuomintang. On this basis Lenin considered that a future proletarian party had to, "while criticising the petty bourgeois utopias and reactionary views of Sun Yat-sen.. take care to single out, defend, and develop the revolutionary-democratic core of his political and agrarian programme." (*Ibid*, p.169)

It can easily be deduced from this that far from wanting to tail the bourgeois nationalist movements Lenin looked forward to an independent proletarian movement in the oppressed countries taking the lead in the democratic revolution. Because of this, when the Comintern debated the national and colonial question in June 1920 it was Lenin who categorically put forward the idea that there was a "need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries." Lenin went on to argue that "the Communist International should support the bourgeois-democratic movements in colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in these countries, the elements of future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e. those of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into temporary alliances with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even in its most embryonic form..." (*CW*, Vol.31, pp.149-50)

So Lenin, far from wanting to tail the bourgeois nationalist liberation movements as many an epigone does today, saw the task of the Comintern to criticise the limitations of bourgeois nationalism no matter how revolutionary it was, not matter how heroic. Indeed, in all Lenin's writings not the merest hint of a suggestion can be found to indicate that the tasks of communists is to do what the bourgeois nationalists command and refrain from actions that they have not given the go ahead for.

Lenin's principled position stood the test of practice in numerous backward areas of the old Tsarist empire. This was the case because it was firmly anchored in the scientific method and outlook of dialectical and historical materialism and fully understood that proletarian political independence was no luxury, but a necessity. His conclusions about the correct strategy for communists the world over to pursue in relation to bourgeois nationalism in the colonies and backward countries are therefore diametrically opposite to the eclectic and idealist tailism we find in the pages of the *Morning Star*, *Straight Left*, *Proletarian*, *Fight Racism Fight Imperialism*, and other blockheaded advocates of non-criticism.

Have conditions changed so much in recent years as to invalidate Lenin's stand? No, they have not. Imperialism might not be as strong and all-pervasive, it might have changed its form, but it has not changed its essence. As to the national liberation

struggle, because many countries have gained formal independence the necessity for the ever growing and ever more powerful proletariat in the ex-colonial countries to form communist parties and point the national struggle against imperialism in a socialist direction is more pressing than ever.

Nothing has happened in the real world which excuses communists in the backward capitalist countries merging with bourgeois nationalism let alone communists in the imperialist countries transforming themselves into news agencies or branches of the liberation movements. The correctness of *unconditionally* supporting the democratic content of the national liberation movements remains, but so does the *conditionality* towards the programmes of these movements.

Thus, communists in the backward countries are still obliged to defend and develop the revolutionary democratic core of movements under the domination of the bourgeoisie and they should still consider all alliances they enter into with bourgeois nationalist forces as being temporary. Bourgeois-led liberation movements should still not be painted in communist colours; the political independence of the proletarian movement should still be guarded and considered more precious than life itself.

Likewise for communists in the imperialist countries: their fundamental tasks remain in essence the same in relationship to liberation movements. We have a duty to offer proletarian aid, advice, and moral support. This should not blind us to inherent limitations of movements led by bourgeois nationalists. Support should therefore only be given to the extent that these movements consistently fight imperialism and every effort should be made to encourage the proletariat in the oppressed countries to pursue their class struggle for socialism. Naturally this rules out all forms of tailism and contradicts the so-called 'principle' of non-criticism.

In light of the irrefutable continued validity and relevance of the Leninist approach to national liberation movements, we have developed our perspectives. Because of our adherence to the truth of Marxism-Leninism we have opposed both those who damn the IRA and Sinn Fein as well as those who uncritically tail them. We have a great respect for the heroism of the IRA and fully acknowledge that Sinn Fein has mass support in the Six Counties from the nationalist population. We defend the republican movement unconditionally against the attack on it from the forces of British imperialism; we support *unconditionally* the democratic content in its programme, but we refuse to paint it in communist colours and stand for proletarian independence from it in Ireland and of course in Britain.

The reasons for this have already been dealt with in general. Our attitude is determined fundamentally by the fact that the republican movement is in essence a bourgeois nationalist movement, albeit one led by revolutionary petty bourgeois radicals. Yes, it is true that Sinn Fein has considerable support from the working class especially in the Six Counties' nationalist ghettos. Despite this, its programme, outlook, methods, and aims all prove it has more in common with the revolutionary nationalist Kuomintang admired, but criticised, by Lenin than his own Bolshevik Party.

Our view of the ANC is broadly the same. Its struggle has rightly won it the respect of all advanced workers; leaders like Nelson Mandela are an inspiration to all revolutionaries and we have a duty to support the ANC against the attacks on it from apartheid. This of course does not lead us to an uncritical position. Some elements of its programme are like the programmes of Sinn Fein, the Kuomintang of Sun Yat-sen, and other bourgeois nationalist movements. Its Freedom Charter contains positions which are thoroughly revolutionary and democratic: these elements must be supported unconditionally by all communists; while other elements are unquestionably utopian and contain more than a hint of petty bourgeois whimsy. These contradictory elements and the class composition and outlook of the ANC mean that communists can only conditionally support the ANC and its programme.

Because we as communists have different methods and long term aims to the ANC there is for us no principle nor practice of simply "following their lead". This is something we apply to fraternal parties and organisations in the world communist

movement. No matter how important they are, or how close, they don't think for us; we take what they say into account, especially in the field of international politics, but we come to our own conclusions. If there was an International which operated as a world democratic centralist party things would be different, but then we would be following a collective lead in which communists from all countries participated in deciding after extensive debate.

Our goal is unambiguous. It is to create the best possible conditions for socialist revolution in Britain, South Africa, and the world as a whole. This is not something the ANC would adhere to and we do not demand it should.

Our solidarity with the ANC and its struggle against apartheid obviously takes into account what its needs of the hour are. If the ANC for example needed a safe haven in Britain it would be criminal not to direct work towards that end. This said, our solidarity work as well as having the duty of serving the liberation movement also must be determined by the demands of the worldwide struggle for socialism and the class struggle in Britain. These two 'masters' must be served but the priority must always be towards the proletarian and international tasks of the world revolution.

3. British imperialism and South Africa

Although in Section I of this study (*The Leninist* No.24) we warned of the dangers of considering the fall of the South African apartheid regime as being akin to the apocalypse for the 'West', we pointed out that Britain has a "greater exposure" than its imperialist rivals. This is true in absolute terms and can be seen in the following table:

Source and value of foreign investment in South Africa (market value mid-1985)	
Country	£bn
Britain	12
USA	10
Federal Germany	2
France	1.5
Switzerland	1
Rest of world	5
Total	31.5

The United Kingdom South Africa Trade Association is also reported as saying that South Africa is "Britain's 12th largest export market, represents between 7 and 10 percent of total overseas investment, and some 400 groups quoted on the London Stock Exchange have one or more South African subsidiaries," and in 1982 Britain's total gross income from South Africa was around £3.5 billion (*Financial Times* August 2 1985).

What these figures show is that as well as Britain being more exposed in absolute terms, in relative terms this exposure is even greater. For if we compare the economic weight of Britain with that of Federal Germany or France, let alone the USA, it is clear that in proportionate terms Britain has far more to lose than them. In exports and imports, investments and earnings, Britain's interests in South Africa are of relative importance to it to a much greater extent than its rivals. Thus while Britain's stake in South Africa accounts for around 7% to 10% of overseas investments, the USA's only represents 1% of its foreign investments.

This and the fact that British capital is concentrated to a higher degree in the mining sector, where super-profits rest on apartheid in its most rigid and brutal form, means that Britain is extraordinarily vulnerable to and wary of any rocking of the apartheid boat.

Knowing that its capital is less dynamic and would therefore be less responsive to any significant change in South Africa, British imperialism has done its utmost to temper and make ineffective moves towards imposing even the most innocuous sanctions. No wonder Thatcher has appointed Lord Anthony Barber as the British representative to the Commonwealth delegation to South Africa. He is a former Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer and now Chairman of Standard Chartered Bank: the second biggest banking group in South Africa.

As well as this, the Anti-Apartheid Movement has already conclusively shown that the 'restrictive measures' Thatcher has agreed to are full of loopholes. The Thatcher government has turned a blind eye to breaches of the United Nations arms

embargo by companies such as Plessey, and although guidelines were issued in 1979 banning North Sea oil deliveries, British based transnationals continue to deliver supplies. In the first eight months of this year South Africa imported £5.67 million worth of oil, which covers 20% of its energy needs and 80% of the fuel used in transport. British Petroleum and Shell alone accounted for 40% of these sales.

The Tory Party is itself up to its imperialist neck in the blood and gore of the apartheid system. At least 34 Tory MPs are known to have assets in South Africa or are directors of companies with subsidiaries there. Among the most notable are Tom King, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; he has shares in the State Tilney Company, which has South African subsidiaries; James Prior the ex-cabinet minister is chairman of General Electric and a director of Barclays Bank; Cecil Parkinson is a director of Babcock International Tarmac, and Sears Holdings, which all have subsidiaries in South Africa; and Eldon Griffiths, Tory advisor to the Police Federation, was a director of Redman Heenan, a firm found to be smuggling arms equipment. Denis Thatcher himself is a director of Burmah Retail, and Quintin Hazell, both with South African subsidiaries. Big business has been grateful to the Tories for their determination to back Botha and apartheid. Last year over £1 million came into Tory Party coffers from companies with South African interests — nearly 50% of its business donations.

This is not to say that Reagan, Mitterand, or Kohl are any more concerned about the horrors of apartheid. They, like Thatcher, serve a monopoly capitalist class which is concerned with one thing and one thing alone: extracting more and more surplus value from the superexploited black working class in South Africa. No doubt Reagan, Mitterand, and Kohl calculate that by agreeing to token sanctions they will not only placate public opinion at home but manoeuvre their own imperialism into an advantageous position in the event of the regime in South Africa having to undergo sweeping change, including perhaps the promotion of a puppet black like Buthelezi, as a front for the continuation of capitalist exploitation.

The ruling circles in these countries, the plutocrats, the heads of the giant monopolies and banks, as well as the government bureaucracy, are increasingly convinced that only by cracking the whip of limited sanctions can Botha and the National Party be persuaded to keep taking steps towards a controlled reform, the alternative to which they rightly fear is the precipice of revolution. Reagan, Mitterand, and Kohl are obviously aware that their imperialist interests require change in South Africa. This leads them to make noises about the inequalities of apartheid. They are confident that their countries' transnationals could, with not too much trouble, cope with limited cosmetic changes in the form of capitalist exploitation in South Africa.

It is Britain's far greater relative exposure which makes Thatcher the 'odd man out'. She is extremely wary of doing anything that might jeopardise British investments in and trade with South Africa. Because of Britain's long term decline and poor economic health, Thatcher fears possible dire repercussions on Britain's domestic situation and standing as a major imperialist power if the apartheid goose stopped, no matter how temporarily, laying its diamond-studded golden eggs.

4. Sanctions

Faced with Thatcher's intransigence some are insisting that "all the activities of the AAM should be aimed at compelling the British government to implement and strictly enforce comprehensive sanctions against the apartheid regime". They demand that the Iron Lady follow the lead of the 'socialist' Mitterand and Star Wars Reagan. This, it is argued, should be the "focus of all anti-apartheid work" and is the most effective solidarity we can deliver to the South African masses in their struggle with the apartheid beast. We disagree.

Surely it must be transparently clear to even the most parochial and narrow minded that Reagan's and Mitterand's sanctions are not only in economic terms of little or no importance, but what motivates them is a desire to save capitalism in South Africa and promote the sordid interests of their own imperialism. If this is the case, why fall into the trap of thinking that if Britain were to

impose its own sanctions they would be any different in substance? And no pious resolutions calling for strict enforcement will make a jot of difference.

It is certainly possible that as a by-product of mass protests by opponents of apartheid, or pressure from other imperialist powers for a united front, Thatcher might soften her stubborn, intransigent position. She could, it is true, be pushed into taking measures similar to Reagan, who, with one eye on Congress and the other on the millions of US citizens outraged by the carnage in South Africa, announced, at prime TV time, very limited sanctions.

That Reagan is not trying to promote the cause of the South African black masses is obvious. Sanctions from a man who mourns the US defeat in Vietnam, who glories in the Marines' triumph in Grenada, and who has wet dreams about repeating this success in Nicaragua can only be fake solidarity, designed as a sop to public opinion and to advance the interests of US imperialism. It would be foolish to think otherwise.

If this is the case, why imagine that Thatcher would, or could, be pressed into support for a national liberation struggle? To think she can be is like expecting the devil to perform saintly miracles. Thatcher, the victor over Argentina (the enemy without), the victor over the miners (the enemy within), the loyal servant of a British capitalism which came into being "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt", a capitalism which actually laid the material and moral foundations for the foul apartheid system in South Africa, is hardly likely to do anything different from her hero in the White House. So if Britain agreed to sanctions they would in essence be exactly the same as those imposed against Ian Smith's Rhodesia, when under both Labour and Tory governments British owned transnationals continued a flourishing trade in a whole range of products and services.

Most tendencies, ranging from the pro-Labour Party/pro-Morning Star AAM Executive Committee to the SWP (Guildford), which submitted resolutions to the AGM of the AAM on December 1 1985 in effect called for little more than joining David (Dr Death) Owen and the Church of the Tory Party at prayer in calling upon Thatcher to do a Harold Wilson; it speaks volumes about the crisis that grips them. For this is no simple matter of blockheadedness, but a cowardly cop out from the struggle for working class political independence. Instead of looking to the power of working class action, faith is placed in pressurising the government using the supposed power of consumer boycotts, reasoned argument, and the occasional mass demonstration, all within the parameters set by the labour and trade union bureaucracy.

The mendacious Labour Party and trade union tops are of course used to heading campaigns which in practice commit nobody to anything. They are used to empty tub thumping rhetoric and the windbaggy of parliament. But then they are tied hand and foot to British imperialism through their complete commitment to British imperialism's prosperity and their determination to get back into the "corridors of power" with the election of the "next Labour government".

Because their opposition to apartheid is nothing but hot air, Neil Kinnock can unhesitatingly call for sanctions from the Tory government. At the same time he can refuse to countenance a Labour government releasing imprisoned miners, reinstating those sacked, and reimbursing the NUM for the funds legally robbed from them by the bosses' courts during the course of the Great Strike. In the same way, a TUC which only voted by the narrowest of margins to call upon the "next Labour government" to review the cases of those miners sacked and imprisoned can overwhelmingly call for the Tories to act and impose sanctions.

With the sanctions ball safely in the Tories' court the Labour and TUC fat cats can sit back with a self-congratulating supercilious smile and admire their magnificent solidarity in the left press, not least the *Morning Star*. They can proudly parade outside South Africa House, and in front of flashing press cameras and the blazing TV lights display their gaudy indignation at the refusal of Thatcher's government to act.

Unfortunately our CPGB's *Marxism Today* and *7 Days* and many others praise and flatter these emperors of the labour movement. But there are those who have the audacity to cry out loud 'these emperors

have no clothes', who say that solidarity must be real if it is to be worth anything. Far from waiting for Thatcher to fight apartheid we must take up the cudgels ourselves.

This means more than paying ritualistic deference to Dunnes strikers in Dublin, CGT miners in France, and Southampton dockers for their stand, it means making their actions the inspiration for a mighty strike wave against apartheid and its British imperialist backers. The Labour Party and TUC leadership will do all in their power to contain and divert such a strike wave if it ever came about. They have every reason to fear workers' sanctions like the plague. For such sanctions would damage the prosperity of Britain and inevitably lead to violations of bourgeois legality.

Such sanctions would be real as they do not rely on the Tory government having a brainstorm, but on independent actions by workers who have every interest in the overthrow of apartheid and the destruction of British imperialism. No wonder the splendid example of the Dunnes shop-workers, CGT miners, and Southampton dockers, let alone the one month boycotting of all South African trade by Scandinavian transport workers, has been so little publicised or belittled as only providing a moral example for the Tories to follow as the *Morning Star* did. These actions show that rank and file workers have gone way beyond their leaders and would-be leaders; they have, as workers will, instinctively grasped the fact that solidarity with the South African liberation movement must mean more than TUC and Labour Party conference paper resolutions and self righteous speeches.

That the British labour bureaucracy wants to keep things in the realm of hot air can also be easily seen from the TGWU reaction to the brave attempt by the Swedish transport union to get the International Transport Workers' Federation to declare a world wide boycott of trade with apartheid: it was opposition from Federal German and British affiliates which blocked the move. Such back stage treachery says a million times more about the worth of trade union bureaucrats than any TGWU resolution or Labour Party conference 5 minute standing ovation for Oliver Tambo.

Imperialist sanctions against South Africa, so loved by reformists, radicals and liberals, are and can only be a sop. The left should be exposing them, not creating illusions in them. In the same way we should make it crystal clear that transnationals like Barclays 'disinvesting' from South Africa has nothing to do with big business sympathy with the downtrodden masses but is dictated by the straightforward problems of securing sufficient profit and concern as to South Africa's stability and thus future profitability.

The struggle of the South African masses could be greatly assisted by direct solidarity. This should not be doubted. South Africa is dependent on foreign imports in a whole range of key areas in both industry and defence. It is also reliant on continued inflows of capital, as well as exports of gold, diamonds, and the like. It is therefore very vulnerable to workers' sanctions, despite desperate and astronomically expensive attempts to develop alternatives to imports like the Sasol coal to oil plant. Moreover, workers' sanctions would of course have great political impact. The South African workers undoubtedly yearn to feel the warmth and encouragement of international proletarian solidarity as they gird themselves for the 'final battle'.

Workers in Britain could, with sufficient determination, see to it that all exports of arms related equipment is blocked. In this, those in the factories that manufacture this material are obviously in the front line, but rail, road, and airport workers as well as seamen have an equal responsibility.

Other workers should also look for ways they can add their weight to the fight against apartheid, not least those whose employers have subsidiaries in South Africa. We must augment mass demonstrations, pickets, and other protests with militant proletarian direct action: pulling the plugs on telex and telephone links, refusing to move apartheid goods, blacking letters to and from South Africa, and preventing trading in the Rand are all good examples.

And with skilful propaganda and careful preparation such actions can become even more militant, encompassing protests by a whole spectrum of the population from

doctors to black unemployed youth, as well as the decisive action of the organised working class. It should also be realised that if we could get miners, steelworkers, teachers, hospital workers, and all other sections of our class with a burning grievance against the Thatcher government to halt work even for a day to demand, say, the release of a prominent jailed opponent of apartheid, we would not only be striking a mighty moral and physical blow against apartheid, but also one against Botha's most important backer, British capitalism, our main enemy. We would thus be taking a stride forward in winning our own liberation. Certainly the overthrow of apartheid would, as we have said, rock a shaky British imperialism to its rotten foundations, and for that reason if for no other we should spare no effort in solidarity with the heroic masses in South Africa.

This perspective should in no way be counterposed to getting the British government to take measures such as breaking diplomatic relations with Pretoria. But embargoes, the ending of loans, and other such governmental acts will not be won by persuasion, but through militant action. Perhaps of even more importance governmental 'honesty' can only be maintained and ensured if we have the muscle to close loopholes as well as the organisation to check up on compliance.

The Hands Off Russia Campaign forced the British government to stop backing aggression against Soviet Russia, not because it was won to the view that such aggression was not in its interests, but because the consequences of continuing to supply Poland with arms would have led to wide spread industrial action up to and including a general strike. The 'argument' of the Hands Off Russia Campaign was supported by the formation of Councils of Action, mass rallies, and direct action, not least in the famous blacking of the Jolly George. Such a militant 'argument' forced the TUC to threaten a general strike and forced the government to retreat.

We should learn similar forms of 'argument' when dealing with Thatcher and her ministers. They are sure to understand such an 'argument' far better than any convoluted cant about Britain's honour and standing in the international community. We all know that Thatcher and the class she serves do not give a damn about the horrors of apartheid, the misery of the 'homelands' system, let alone the degradation and want suffered by millions of superexploited black workers. What matters to them is making sure that the big profits to be made out of this brutal system keep flowing into Britain and the never satisfied coffers of our transnational industrial corporations and bloated banking empires. Only by building the most powerful, most militant, and most determined solidarity movement which can threaten to do more damage to the interests of capital than the loss of South African trade and investments can it be 'persuaded' to end its backing for Botha and the apartheid regime.

5. Irish lessons

Those who scoff at the idea of anyone deserting the just cause of the black masses in South Africa should learn a lesson or two from the experience of Ireland.

Ireland has been oppressed by British imperialism in the most brutal form. Time and time again the Irish people have fought to rid their land of the hated British and time and time again terror, draconian laws, and divide and rule were used to beat them down into submission. Marx and Engels stood four square with the Irish people against Britain and called upon the British working class to do likewise as "the first condition for their own social emancipation". (Marx and Engels *Ireland and the Irish Question* p.408) Lenin praised the position of Marx and Engels developed on Ireland as a model of proletarian internationalism and relevant for all communists.

Of course, as is well known, the principled position of unconditionally supporting the Irish people's democratic struggle against British imperialism has found a wide swathe of opposition from the workers' movement in Britain. Marx and Engels had countless battles with British trade union leaders over the Irish question. These gentlemen looked down upon the rebellious and unrespectable Irish and considered it their holy mission to bring the civilising influence of British trade

unionism to them. Lenin and the young CPGB had to fight similar philistines who in the name of socialism excused the national oppression of the Irish. Indeed, because of the corrupting influence of imperialism, by the late 1960s the CPGB had itself fallen under the chauvinist sway.

Thus today while virtually every tendency on the British political scene calls for the release of Nelson Mandela there is an almost unanimous opposition to the IRA and Sinn Fein. It was Neil Kinnock who has in true Labourite bipartisanship condoned the Tories barring leading Sinn Feiners from Britain and it was his party which introduced the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act, which is now being used not only against Irish patriots, but against members of SWAPO and other liberation movements. So what value should we place on Kinnock's bear hug embrace of Oliver Tambo at the Labour Party conference in Bournemouth this year? What trust should those wanting to see apartheid smashed place in the Labour Party which boasts of its loyalty to British imperialism in Ireland?

The reason for Labour lionising Tambo and joining in the torrent of anti-apartheid actions is straightforward: it is popular and above all safe. The South African revolution can be supported because as yet it doesn't matter. It is blacks who are being killed and until the revolution moves into a conscious stage crocodile tears can be shed, calls for sanctions from the Tories made, and the ANC's armed struggle justified.

This is not the case with Ireland. True, the struggle is led by forces with a similar political physiognomy to the ANC's. But Ireland is not just close to home, it is considered 'home' by most bourgeois politicians, and that includes the overwhelming majority of Labour MPs. In Ireland there is a direct challenge to the British state and it is the soldiers of British regiments that are being shot at and killed. Ireland is thus an acid test which does not allow any room for hypocritical internationalist gestures from aspiring Prime Ministers. Ireland is too important, too violent, too near for Neil Kinnock to even consider talking to Gerry Adams, let alone getting into a long lost brother clinch with him in front of TV and press cameras.

At present there can be no doubt that the black masses are bearing the brunt of the violence that has become an endemic feature of daily life in South Africa. While a handful of whites have died the number of blacks mown down runs into many hundreds. Yes, some of those killed have been black stooges of apartheid, but it has been the South African police and army which has accounted for the overwhelming majority of killings. It is this and the fact that the revolution remains at a spontaneous stage which allows pacifists like Bishop Tutu to maintain mass influence. It also does nothing to upset the sensibilities of numerous high minded liberals, establishment clerics, cynical trade union bigwigs, smug Labour leaders, and assorted peaceniks who have swarmed round the anti-apartheid honey pot.

But what would happen if the boot was so to speak on the other foot? What would happen if the masses were to get the AK 47s and bazookas they have clamoured for, what if the ANC and the SACP could establish no-go areas in which revolutionary justice ruled? In other words what would happen if the revolution began to move from its spontaneous stage and the black proletariat begins to realise itself as a class for itself? And what if the masses turn their hatred of apartheid into effective military action which saw the number of dead white soldiers, policemen, and civilians steadily begin to rise?

If this were to happen, what then of the pacifist opponents of apartheid? Would they recognise the difference between the violence of the oppressed and the violence of the oppressors? Or would they start blaming both sides for the mounting toll of deaths? Certainly if the black working class shows its determination to not only put down the apartheid beast but the system that gave birth and feeds it, then many who have limited their solidarity to simply calling upon Margaret Thatcher to act, for isolated individual gestures, and for safe protests could run for the cover of respectability.

Fairweather friends like the Bishops of a Church of England which is an integral part of British monopoly capital, Liberal MPs whose main concern is to stop revolution in

South Africa, and the trade union tops who are equally committed to the continued prosperity of British imperialism are all likely to not only fight against workers' direct solidarity action, but eschew the black masses as their 'final battle' erupts. The reason for this is simple. A democratic revolution in South Africa led by the proletariat, a revolution which promised to carry on uninterruptedly towards the tasks of socialism, would make the City of London and the Stock Exchange tremble with its seismic shock waves.

Because South Africa is still of such great importance to British imperialism the violent overthrow of apartheid could prove extremely damaging; certainly if this ushered in a dictatorship of the proletariat not only would British imperialist interests in South Africa be jeopardised, but the oppressed masses throughout the world especially those in the African continent would look to follow the South African example. British imperialism with its investments and exploitative relations with countries like Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana would be more than worried.

So solidarity with South Africa should not be looked on as an easy touch. As the revolution unfolds it will undoubtedly inspire, but it will also frighten. Those who back British imperialism in its terroristic war in the Six Counties will stop fulsome praise of the black masses and their struggle. Instead they will voice concern about communist influence, raise the bogey of Soviet 'expansionism' and call for a peaceful compromise.

Because of this, solidarity with the black masses in South Africa will, if it is to be genuine, be forced to stand against British imperialism and its political agents in the workers' movement. Communists should clearly and unambiguously state that the Labourite leaders are no trustworthy friends to the liberation movement. In the event of British imperialism feeling really threatened by revolution in South Africa there is the distinct possibility that they would quickly and treacherously reveal their true social chauvinist colours as they have over Ireland.

And what goes for the Labourites goes for all sections of what might be called bourgeois liberal opinion in Britain. The BBC's fingerwagging tut-tutting when reporting South African police pumping lead into unarmed black civilians would be replaced by condescending 'both sides are mad' bemused propaganda we are so used to over the Six Counties. *The Guardian* would devote tortuous leaders to the futility of inter-racial conflict and perhaps urge UN intervention. As to the likes of the *Morning Star* with its head in the clouds of official world communist movement optimism and its feet firmly planted in the soil of British labour movement chauvinism, we can only guess.

What is certain is that we have a duty to the liberation movement in South Africa to warn them of false friends. Communists must do their best to expose them now rather than simply wait for events to take their course and then to adopt a 'told you so' posture.

In building solidarity with the South African masses it is essential not to forget the liberation struggle that is being fought the other side of the St George's Channel. The level of solidarity from the workers' movement to the Irish people has been more than pathetic: it has been a disgrace. Where a demonstration in solidarity with a liberation struggle thousands of miles away can rally 100,000 to Trafalgar Square and have the support of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, demonstrations on Ireland rarely muster more than a few hundred brave souls. This must change and the principled communists and progressives in the Anti-Apartheid Movement should do their utmost to develop and inculcate a genuinely anti-imperialist spirit and determination. If they do this successfully, the day will come when London will see 100,000 people marching for Irish freedom as they have recently for freedom in South Africa. And that day will be the beginning of the end of British imperialism and British political backwardness. A mass movement against apartheid can be used to batter down the ideological influence of pro-imperialist ideas and as a springboard to conscious anti-imperialism. Then indeed will the days of monopoly capitalism in Britain be numbered.

Jack Conrad



Charity goes pop It's only rock 'n' roll

IS Bob Geldof the archetypal ordinary man in the street, responding to disaster with a touching impatience for red tape; or is he an absolute apolitical prat? In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels spoke of the "bourgeois socialists" who then included "economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the conditions of the working class, organisers of charity, members of the societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole and corner reformers of every imaginable kind."

Can we now add to this list over-the-hill Irish punks?

I once remember watching *Top of the Pops* at the height of the 'new wave' and seeing Bob Geldof and his Boomtown Rats performing a dire little ditty entitled 'Mary of the 4th Form'. I went to make some tea. If I had known then that the leader of these ragged popsters would one day be a serious contender for the Nobel Peace prize and (if some people have their way), god, I might have stayed.

While Geldof's fundraising activities at the end of the day will not raise more than the 'official' aid from the government, its success bears witness to the still enormously strong liberal and humanitarian consciousness among working class people in the West. The centrepiece of the campaign was, of course, the mammoth 15 hour transatlantic rock concert on July 13 featuring 45 different rock 'establishment' acts.

It was hard not to be cynical about the motives and attitudes of some of the performers, including Geldof himself, whose careers before this charity bash may have been plug-hole bound. More important, however, than the paternalistic, reactionary liberalism that underpinned this gross act of self-indulgent exhibitionism by the obscenely bloated rock and pop fraternity is the question: Is 'aid' in general any good?

Ethiopia

The BBC documentary record of the

famine-stricken towns of Mekele and Korem in Northern Ethiopia stunned many viewers. The atrocious scenes of death and disease prompted large numbers of people to take action of sorts. A recently produced Oxfam leaflet reports that some 50,000 people have joined their Hungry for Change fasting movement in the last twelve months alone. The politics of the 'aid' and charity movement have remained, unsurprisingly, totally dominated by petty bourgeois whimsy and tokenism. The most radical stance of the do-gooders such as Geldof has been to contrast the Common Market food mountains to the dire need of the under-developed countries:

"I may be a political *naif* and a political *ingénue*, but most people would agree with me that it makes no political sense, little emotional sense, and nil moral sense that Europe should wallow in food, while millions of people in ... Africa are dying of starvation."

This year's EEC grain mountain doubles to 20 million tonnes, yet the community governments' finance ministers are cutting back on Europe's food aid. There are even various schemes to chemically break down the stockpiled cereal into its constituent parts in order to make plastic out of it. Total aid today is lower than in 1978-79 and still £70 million more is to be lopped off Britain's proposed budget of £360 million for 1986. The justification being used for this pruning is that the rains have been good this year in drought bound areas; but as the *Financial Times* (October 18) noted:

"... despite the fact that the rains have generally been better this year... Rain is little benefit to peasants who have either been displaced or are without seed, oxen, or tools."

Sub-Saharan Africa is facing human calamity on an unimaginable scale. But is the solution simply an equitable transfer of resources and food produce to the 'poor' parts of the world from the rich, as Geldof and the bourgeois moralists of the

charity movement suggest?

Imperialism

The problems of Ethiopia today stem from its historical subordination to imperialism. In terms of agriculture, for example, the World Bank has estimated that Ethiopia has sufficient natural resources to support 310 million people, that is, about ten times its present population. Some 70% of the land surface is suitable for arable use, yet less than 12% is actually used in any way and less than 6% is permanently cultivated. The vast bulk of Ethiopian farming takes place on tiny, unproductive subsistence plots which yield barely enough to sustain a single peasant familial unit.

This backwardness of the Ethiopian agricultural sector is explained by the domination of the country by imperialism. For example, the British backed Emperor Menelik propped up the power of the old landowners as a means of social control in the face of the threat posed by the penetration of capitalism. Oppressed and stagnated by the weight of archaic and moribund formations, social relations in the countryside remained primitive and regressive.

Similarly, Ethiopia's nascent industrial development was suffocated by imperialism's domination. For instance, in the 1890s some 90% of capital investment in the country was Italian and concentrated in spheres preparing primary products for export. Any indigenous small scale capitalist production in Ethiopia which may have had the potential to become larger centres of capital was effectively wiped out by the influx of cheap European goods. The patterns of industrial development therefore ensured that effective demand inside the country remained low and the home market narrow. Industries emerging, therefore, whether as a result of an 'aid' project, imperialist implantation, or (rarely) local capital accumulation, develop with an orientation to

export and thus ensure that the underdevelopment of the indigenous industrial infrastructure is reproduced.

Thus, in some African countries you can see the obscenity of much of the best land for food growing being bought up by big enterprises and used for producing cash crops of strawberries or carnations for export while dire starvation and poverty exists a short distance away.

Ethiopia's tragedy, therefore, is not the result of natural disaster or the neo-Malthusian reasons offered up recently by *The Economist* of "drought, war, too many people". No, the blame lies squarely at the door of imperialism. Given this, does 'aid' have a progressive role to play? Should we, along with the fading pop-star Bob Geldof and the fading pro-Labourite rag the *Morning Star*, call for the government to morally match Band Aid's prodigious sums?

State Capital

'Aid' first saw the light of day during the period of the collapse of the old colonial empires. It is important to note that, at least initially, the 'donors' gave only to their former colonial possessions and fought tenaciously to keep other potential imperialist 'donors' out: a cute little arrangement known as 'special' or 'traditional' ties. For example, in the period 1969-71 British aid totalled \$413 million, of which over \$344 million went to Commonwealth countries. In this way Britain has maintained its imperialist relationship with countries such as India, Pakistan and Tanzania.

'Aid', then, evidently has little to do with any sort of philanthropic urge on the part of British or any other imperialism. There are other rather more down-to-earth reasons for the giving of such 'assistance'.

Thus, a few years ago a £25 million order for two general purpose cargo carriers for the Ethiopian merchant navy was financed substantially through 'aid'. In fact, almost half of investment in Ethiopia since 1979 has been in the form of 'aid'. State 'aid', one could say, represents the export of state capital and therefore it has broader, more far-sighted objectives than the investment of individual capitalists. Through 'aid' the imperialist state will attempt to ensure social stability in the country in order to protect the interests of its capitalists and at the same time reinforce and reproduce the patterns of subordination and domination by imperialism which enslave countries like Ethiopia.

Heavy Responsibilities

The fact that Ethiopia is potentially one of the three largest markets in Africa, plus its strategic position in relation to both the Indian Ocean and the Gulf dictates its importance to imperialism. It also places heavy responsibilities on British workers in regard to the Ethiopian masses. It is time to stop attempting to tack 'Bank-Aids' across the gaping wounds of world poverty and start addressing ourselves to the defeat of the Ethiopians' and our real enemy: imperialism in general and British imperialism in particular. That is why *The Leninist* will not be urging you to buy any of the multifarious charity records this Christmas. Instead of this we call upon our readers to donate any spare cash you have to the fight to build a Leninist Communist Party capable of taking on the exploiters of the Ethiopian people in this country, the British ruling class. The day that goocy Bananarama, pompous Paul Weller, greasy Simon Le Bon, and the other grotesque egocentric poseurs of the music industry play a benefit in aid of that that will be the day we advocate buying pop records in order to 'Feed the World'. But then, as the song says, 'That'll be the day...'

Ian Mahoney

83 and...

A wonderful byproduct of the split in the WRP has been the way that both sides have dredged up dirt from each other's past to use in the dog fight.

One little anecdote from the Bandates that particularly tickled our fancy concerned a recent intellectual 'wobbly' thrown by comrade Healy. Apparently, a few months ago 'Merry Gerry' was wandering around WRP headquarters rambling on at any poor soul he could corner about how the polyp up President Reagan's nose was the most significant event in the world since the 1956 death of Stalin.

There is a slightly modified carol that is doing the rounds in Leninist circles. It starts "God bless that Gerry mental man..."

There are 26 verses, but on the advice of our lawyers...

Those zany fun-lovers in that 'laid-back' sectlet Proletarian (a group that has managed to produce two editions of their journal in over four years of existence and who criticise The Leninist for 'frantically churning out' a monthly) seem to be moving up in the world. Quite a number of them (in relative terms, of course) managed to become stewards at the AAM AGM. The 'Proles' did an excellent job for the AA leadership preventing people from speaking, guarding the microphone and enforcing bans on the distribution of political literature — a day's work to be really proud of.

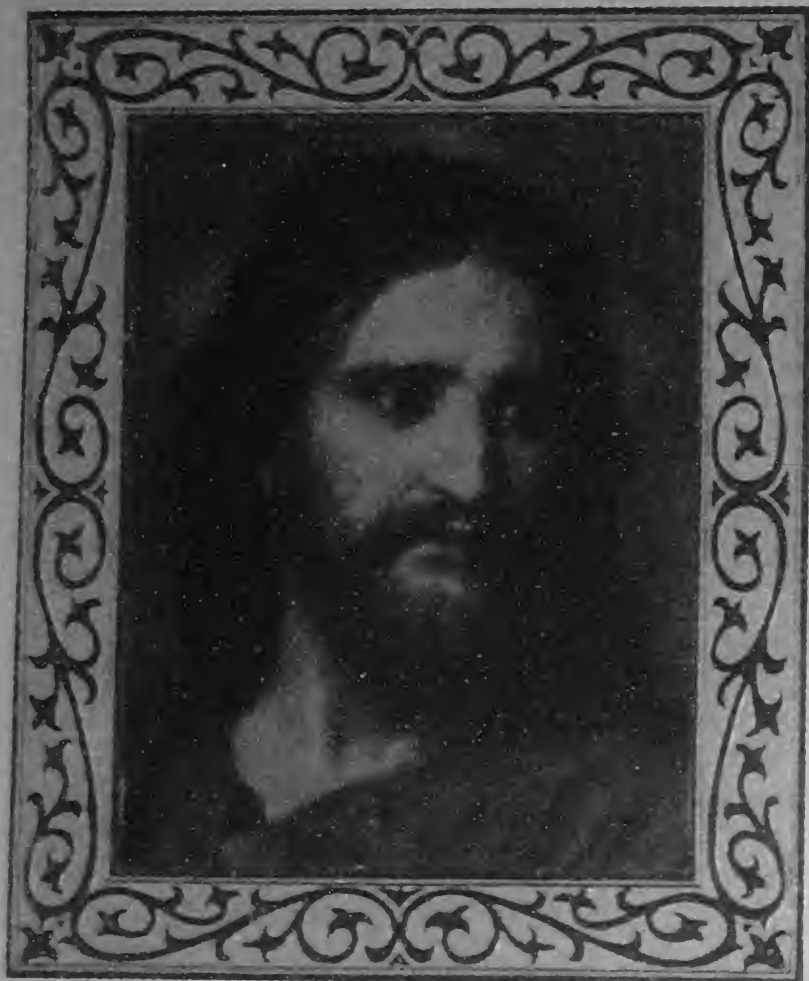
During a physical confrontation at the beginning of the day, a leading RCG supporter was man-handled out of the conference hall by officials. In the course of the bust-up this RCGer was actually bitten by one of the stewards!

But wait a minute! Might not this biting incident have something to do with the fact that our comrades 'on the street' have always described this ga-ga little grouplet as "rabidly anti-Leninist"? Probably not, but we are taking no chances we're getting all our comrades to get anti-rabies jabs. Were Proletarian directly involved in the ~~bite~~ incident? The working class (and the health authorities) need to know.

Leninist comrades were thoroughly confused by the Socialist Workers Party on November's Anti-Apartheid demo. It was not that SWP cadre confounded our comrades with the profundity of their arguments (far from it in fact). No, what really threw us off balance was this organisation's main slogan on the march: "One Solution-Revolution!"

The problem is of course, that the SWP do not actually believe that there is a revolutionary situation in South Africa today! A less radical slogan presumably would not have had the desired effect of buoying up the flagging spirit of SWP members and convincing them that they were, despite what everybody else is saying, really in a terribly 'hard' revolutionary organisation.

The Morning Star seems intent on becoming the voice of god as well as the conscience of Thatcher. According to its November 23 editorial god "will ... remember who stood on the side of justice" in South Africa... apparently something Mrs Thatcher "would do well to heed".



The Jesus Myth

IT'S Christmas Day and you've just polished off the plum pud. Like the rest of the population you slump in front of the box: what do you get? 'Goodwill' messages from Mrs Thatcher and the Queen, calls for 'peace' from the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury and endless charity appeals from everyone: and it's all done in the name of Jesus. Indeed the hype as well as the schmaltz that surrounds this man/god's birthday lasts nearly a month in which around a third of all retail trade is conducted, huge amounts of alcohol is consumed, and hapless children are dragooned into playing angels and wise men in countless nativity plays.

What's it all about? Of course on one level pure commercialism, on another once a year binge. But to leave it there would be simple minded. For during the Christmas period the population is subjected to an unprecedented amount of pacifist, pro-family, and reactionary religious propaganda which cannot be explained away with knowledge-

able references to the Roman Saturnalia of the Druids winter solstice celebrations. The Jesus story is used to glorify the liberal charity mongering of the rich, to make us workers content with our lot, and to get us to put our hope for better things in the life hereafter.

For the Church and to a degree even the state the life and death of Jesus are used to justify cosmetic changes in the system as against its overthrow. Jesus the giver of alms, Jesus the meek and mild, Jesus the eupherial son of god with his miracles and otherworldliness is the cure for everything from heroin addiction to homelessness and millions believe it. True, church attendance is declining, but what about those who positively declare themselves atheists: we are still a small minority. Even in our working class movement religion retains a grip. Yes, it is used as an argument for 'social justice' and the 'redistribution of wealth', but it is also used as an argument against the scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism

which recognises the necessity of the class struggle leading to revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Against the truly humanist theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism the reformists in our movement, from lay preacher Arthur Scargill to the now departed Salvation Army stalwart Terry Duffy, pit the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount and the Jesus who cleared the money changers out of the temple at Jerusalem.

Unfortunately those with god on their side usually end up on the other side to the working class at the end of the day. Indeed, for the working class atheism and an objective understanding of reality are not luxuries, but a necessity. Without it the proletariat can be bamboozled, corrupted, and diverted from its revolutionary tasks. Leaders with religion in their heads are like over the limit drivers at best and hallucinating alcoholics with the shakes at worst. For while the words of Jesus can be used to convince

strikers of the rightness of their cause they can all too easily be used as a cover for backsliding and rotten compromise with the powers that be who also profess to put their faith in Jesus and his teachings. In other words, the image of Jesus is still a powerful ideological weapon in the hands of the ruling class with which to maintain social cohesion and stability. This makes a Marxist understanding of Jesus an important question. Without it we are in danger of abdicating our responsibilities with a centrist 'what does it matter anyway' sneer that never does and never can do anyone any good, or a 'if you can't beat them let's form an alliance' approach advocated by the Euros.

On the other hand a broad understanding of the truth about Jesus opens the door to an understanding of the objective laws of society and a full appreciation of the dangers represented by giving even an inch to religion in the realm of either philosophy or politics. In this

short article it is obviously impossible to fully explain the development of the Jewish people and the causes that produced their one god religion, let alone the dynamics and contradictions in the Roman world that made it ripe for the Christian phenomenon. But what we can do is to look at Jesus himself, what he was and perhaps more importantly what he was not.

Background

In truth the answer to the Jesus question is by no means simple. Certainly it is unlikely to say the least that he had fair hair and blue eyes as many of the artists of the Western church have given him. He was after all a Palestinian Jew. But what sort of a Jew? This can only be answered by putting Jesus into the setting of Jewish society that existed from around the year 160 BC to 73 AD.

Until 160 BC the Jews had endured numerous foreign rulers. From about 1,000 BC the Jews had been ground between the regional 'superpowers' of their day. The Egyptians, the Assyrians and Persians battled for domination in the Palestine strategic crossroads. At times the Jews enjoyed limited self rule, for example under the Persians and later the Macedonian Greeks. But in 160 BC Judas Maccabaeus drove the Greek/Syrian armies of the Seleucids out of Palestine and established an independent Jewish state.

This independence was only possible because of a 'power-vacuum' with the decline of the post-Alexander Greek world. The vacuum was filled by the rise of the Roman Empire and from 67 BC Roman hegemony was established. At first it ruled through a local quisling who was given responsibility for collecting tribute from the local populace for insatiable Rome.

Roman rule was nothing but organised and systematic robbery. Huge sums were simply stolen from the Jerusalem temple. The Roman Procurators instituted a brutal system of handing over tax collecting from the populace to private contractors who were little better than gangsters. These 'publicans' as the New Testament calls them demanded huge sums from their victims. In the event of refusal to pay or inability to pay the grossly inflated taxes these thugs would employ torture and in the end sell whole families into slavery in lieu of payment.

In 26 AD Procurator Pontius Pilate of New Testament fame began his term of office. The Alexandrian Jewish philosopher Philo described him thus: "He was cruel by nature and hard-hearted and entirely lacking in remorse". Philo gives the following judgement of his rule in Judaea "... bribes, vain, glorious and insolent conduct, robbery, oppression, humiliations, men often sent to death untried, and incessant and unmitigated cruelty." Through robbery, the 'publicans' and a plethora of taxes, including the land-tax, income-tax, water-tax, poll-tax, city-tax, as well as taxes on meat and salt, road taxes, the house tax, boundary taxes, a market tax, and various burdensome customs-duties, bridge tolls etc., the empire was pillaged by the likes of Pilate. No wonder the proud and independent-minded Jews were driven to rebellion time and time again.

Under the leadership of heroic freedom fighters like the Zealots the Jews took up arms against 'Pax Romana'. The Zealots for instance organised guerrilla warfare against Roman occupation from 6 AD and from 66-73 AD led the entire Jewish people in a full-scale war to oust the Romans. Their Warsaw ghetto-like defence of Massada where the Zealots fought to the last man is well known and testifies to the fanatical and near universal hatred of the Romans at the time of Jesus.

In fact, for the Romans Palestine

and the Jews were much like the Irish 'problem' for the British imperialists. While concentrated in Palestine the Jews lived throughout the empire and were in a constant state of rebellion. The Zealots and other Jewish patriots, like the United Irishmen, the Whiteboys, the Fenians and the IRA, could only be beaten using the most brutal and terroristic methods. Throughout the period of Roman occupation many thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of Jewish freedom fighters were cruelly executed using crucifixion. Because of this and the unfettered economic exploitation Roman rule of Palestine was just as devastating and bloody as British rule of Ireland or Nazi German rule of Poland.

So it is easy to imagine how widespread hatred of the Romans was and how deep sympathy for the freedom fighters like the Zealots would have been. Apart from the narrow stratum of quisling collaborators, Jewish opinion opposed the Romans and could broadly be divided between those who considered it prudent to lay low and bide their time until Rome declined and those who were for immediate action. The Pharisees, representing the more wealthy Jew, urged moderation, while movements like the Zealots based more on the downtrodden peasantry and city proletariat were impatient for change.

As well as looking to physical force the Jews also counted on help from god to deliver them from Roman tyranny. With god's aid the Zealots could, they believed, overcome the military superiority of the Romans, as in the past it was said god had ensured the triumph of Judas Maccabaeus, Samson of Gideon, and Joshua. In light of their hopeless military position relative to the mighty Roman Empire, as well as the traditions of the Jewish people, trust and hope in their god's intervention was understandable. Indeed some sects considered protracted guerrilla warfare against the Romans a diversion. These elements placed their hope for liberation in god sending a Messiah who would deliver the Jews from the humiliating rule of Rome and institute a new age of Jewish freedom and independence. There were variations on the theme, some believing deliverance of the Jews would come at the hands of god himself, others thought god would send an angel called the Son of Man. But whatever sect, whatever perspective, the mass of Jews were united in one thing above all others: the ending of Roman rule.

Jesus

It was against this background that Jesus was born. And yet in the New Testament Jesus is portrayed as standing above such questions. He disdains all political involvement and spends much of his time attacking Pharisees, Zealots and the Jews in general: that is when he is not performing stupendous miracles and declaring himself god. If this was in fact true it would have surely had one of two effects: firstly to have prevented Jesus gaining any following from ordinary Jews who would have considered him a lunatic for his claims of divinity; and secondly, news of his ability to turn nature on its head would have aroused excited comment through the civilised world.

Despite this, according to the New Testament, Jesus won thousands of followers throughout Palestine. As well as this, as Gibbon points out in his classic *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, although Jesus was meant to have "suspended the laws of nature" the "sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study appeared unconscious of any alteration in the moral or physical government of the world."

Not only have no genuine contemporary records been found which even mention Jesus in passing, but no modern archeological evidence can be presented to prove his existence let alone his ability to make the lame walk, the blind see, or the dead live.

Does this mean that he never existed? This is of course possible. But a more likely explanation is that Jesus in his short-lived career as the Messiah was one of many, indeed one of so many claiming to be the Messiah, that he did not excite particular comment. This is certainly accepted by many leading scholars, not least Paul Winter, G F Brandon, and Hyam Maccoby.

Evidence is naturally thin on the ground. Detection work is needed. But if we put Jesus in his real historical background the truth can be grasped. The real Jesus can only be seen against the background of a Palestine whose Jewish people yearnt for liberation, and a Jewish people whose culture produced not only countless freedom fighters banking on the knife, but countless freedom fighters banking on god helping to bring about the Kingdom of God in the world in place of the Roman Empire.

For the Jews of course the title 'Messiah' was not a divine one. It simply meant 'anointed'. At the time of Jesus this had come to be associated with not only the 'Messiah' king or priest, but the 'Messiah' who would help to liberate the Jews and perhaps the entire world from Rome. A Jewish Messiah could have had no thought of a pagan style self-sacrifice in order to atone for the sins of mankind. On the contrary a Jewish Messiah would look to becoming a theocratic king who would rule the world as a whole in the name of god. There is ample evidence of countless men around the time of Jesus declaring themselves, or being declared, the Messiah. One contemporary Jewish historian, Josephus, deals with many such instances in his *Jewish Wars*. While later forged versions of this history mention Jesus, the original does not. Despite this a failed apocalyptic armed insurrection by a Galilean prophet named Jesus fits into the general picture of the time but would not produce any particular comment.

Much evidence for this thesis can be found in the Gospels themselves. Of course they often flatly contradict each other, confuse questions, and fly in the face of historical fact, but for Marxists who understand that men make history and gods, and indeed write and re-write the 'word of god', this presents no problem. For those who consider the bible the work of god, not man, this of course cannot be said.

Are the gospels an eye-witness account of Jesus's life? Obviously not. While they undoubtedly contain some of the words of Jesus and his disciples the original sayings and events have been monstrously distorted by later revisions.

The Gospel of St Mark is thought to be the oldest. It was first written at least 50 years after Jesus's death and written in Greek (the language of a people deeply hostile to the Jews at this time). And the only physical trace of the early New Testament is in the form of papyrus fragments which can be dated from the second century, the earliest being a fragment of John's Gospel from around 120 AD. No fragments from the first century have ever been found, but evidence of re-writing is abundant.

What seems to have happened is that Jesus began his mission by proclaiming like many others revolution against Rome and the coming of the 'Kingdom of God'. Later he claimed the title 'Messiah' and was saluted by his proletarian followers as such. In the fervent belief that god would aid him against the Romans he entered Jerusalem to the acclamation of the

people, armed his disciples, and seized the temple, cleaning it of the money changers. Then having failed to spark a general insurrection and with the acceptance of the quisling Roman appointed temple authorities Jesus was effortlessly arrested by the Romans, tried by the corrupt and vicious Pilate, and then crucified by Roman soldiers.

But unlike the followers of other failed Messiahs those of Jesus kept their identity and went on to become a significant sect within the Jewish religion. Like other communistic Jewish sects they proselytised and soon won many adherents from Jewish and non-Jewish proletarian elements throughout the empire, not least in Rome itself. Such people were ready for the revolutionary message of the Nazarenes with their belief in the imminent destruction of the Roman Empire, the end of poverty, and the dawning of a world kingdom of god ruled from Jerusalem.

It was natural following his death for the gospel writers to exaggerate and exaggerate again their claims for Jesus. After all, they believed he still lived like Elijah and would rise again and bring liberation. As well as this they were competing with an array of other religious cults each of which made fantastic claims about the powers of their saviour/god. What is more the ancient world had little understanding or need for historical truth as we understand it. Thus if for example we look at Jesus's supposed ability to raise the dead to life we see ever more wild claims.

In Mark's gospel Jesus is summoned to the bedside of Jairus's daughter, who is at the point of death. All believe she is already dead, but Jesus says "The damsel is not dead but sleepeth"; he lays his hand on her and lo and behold she awakes. (Mark Chap v) In Luke, which is written later than Mark, we have the bringing to life of Nain who has been dead long enough to be on his way to the cemetery. (Luke Chap vii) For John these miracles don't go far enough. In his eleventh chapter he has the coming to life of Lazarus, who has "been dead four days" and "by this time stinketh."

The gospels are always outdoing each other and borrowing from other cults. But more important than the myth making being piled on we also find that the younger the gospel the less and less relationship it has with the political and cultural reality of Jesus's time and place. In Mark especially there are still distinct signs of the communistic teachings of the early church, even remnants of the hatred of the Romans and their collaborators. But more and more in the later gospels to the exaggeration has been added a foul anti-semitism and respect for the laws and legitimacy of Roman rule.

The real Jesus

The early Christian conception of the Messiah coincided exactly with the mainstream Jewish idea that the Messiah would be of royal race. In other words it was necessary for Jesus and his first gospel writers to prove his descentance from the Davidic royal house of Israel.

To the Jews this was an important matter and there can be little doubt that Jesus would have done his utmost to trace his descendants from the royal house of Israel: without it his claim to be the Messiah would be untenable. But to latter day Christians Jesus's family tree was an embarrassment. In their hands the "son of David" as Jesus called himself became literally god's son. Because of this Joseph's paternity through which Jesus claimed his supposed royal blood became irrelevant a clear sign of the latter re-writing and the influence of non-Jewish mystic thought on the Jesus story.

In first century Palestine to proclaim oneself the Messiah was in

no way to lay claim to being god. Likewise to call for the coming of the Kingdom of God was not a purely spiritual expression. Both were in effect political slogans which put those who used them in danger of their lives as was centuries later the case in Tsarist Russia with the demand for the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry from the Bolsheviks.

The gospels have therefore clearly undergone a process of distortion by which the political dimension has been obliterated. The original Jewish and revolutionary content of phrases such as 'Kingdom of God', 'Messiah', and 'son of David' have been given new meaning based on the Greek world outlook.

At root this was because Christianity was "handed down by Judaism to the Romans, by proletarians to world rulers, by a communistic organisation to an organisation formed for the exploitation of all classes." (Karl Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity* p.363)

After his death at the hands of the Romans Jesus's followers, the Nazarenes, did not consider him god. But they did think that Jesus was, through a special miracle, still alive like Enoch and Elijah of the Old Testament. Jesus would, they believed, soon reappear and deliver the Jews and all other people from Rome and bring into being the Kingdom of god in which Jesus himself would be king ruling over the entire world from the holy city of Jerusalem. The Nazarene sect of Judaism quickly spread throughout the Roman empire winning both gentile and Jew, becoming known as Christian because of their belief that Jesus was the Christ or deliverer.

Greek recruits based in Rome did, though, begin to give Jesus divine status and abrogate certain Jewish laws. Paul in particular took the lead in interpreting Jesus's death in terms of Greek Gnostic doctrine and pagan blood rights. The Nazarenes of Jerusalem, however, led by Jesus's brother James, were appalled by Paul's views. A great split took place about 60 AD between the Nazarenes and the Paulinist or Gnostic Christians and a bitter struggle took place for the next 10 years with the Nazarenes holding their own and perhaps gaining the upper hand.

The event that finally gave the Paulinists victory was the Jewish war of independence from 66 to 73 AD. The Nazarenes as loyal Jews fought the Romans and took part in the defence of Jerusalem. When it fell to the Roman legions in 70 AD most of them died in the ensuing massacre.

Faced with the Roman authorities declaring the Jews open targets the Paulinists ran for cover. The Christians, originally an integrally Jewish sect, detached and totally disassociated themselves from the Jews in the hour of their defeat. Submission to Rome became a commandment.

Re-writing

The Nazarene gospel still had too much authority to be discarded. So it was necessary to not only keep exaggerating the supposed power of Jesus, but to go in for a systematic re-writing. This, in the circumstances of the time, involved giving them an anti-Jewish stance, ditching the rebel Jesus for the other-worldly Jesus, and burying their revolutionary and communistic content.

It is this Gnostic Greek distortion of the Jewish original that gives Christianity its mass of contradictions and peculiar assumptions. Because of this we find elements of Jewish radical thought existing side by side with pro-Roman and anti-Jewish propaganda. It could not but be otherwise: the re-writers had to keep some of the original but they did their best to doctor it and make it harmless.

So as well as the gentle Jesus of

the re-writers we find the Jesus who said "I come not to send peace but a sword" (Matthew xxiv) In the same way for those who like to quote the bible to show that Jesus was an ancient CND-style pacifist there is the problem of his issuing swords to his disciples after the last supper reported in Luke.

If Jesus was a pacifist he would have been no threat to the Romans. On the other hand, the execution of the apocalyptic revolutionary who sought to carry out an anti-Roman coup is easy to understand. The re-writers of course crudely tried to shift the real guilt for this execution from the Romans to the Jews themselves. Such outrageous turning of truth on its head was the means by which the Christians attempted to placate the authorities in Rome who were striking out in all directions with the Spartacus and Jewish rebellions just behind them and having just suffered devastating defeats at the hands of the Parthians and Germanic tribes.

Had Jesus confined his activities to preaching peace and miraculous healing he would never have aroused the wrath of the Roman authorities. Because this was not the case we can find Roman accusations made in Luke that he was "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King" (Luke xxxiii 2) This is presented as a false accusation invented by the Jews to discredit Jesus. More likely though, this is a true description of his preachings, so widespread in his day that it warranted no special mention from contemporaries. Pilate's casual order for the crucifixion of the revolutionist Jesus likewise caused no comment from the scribes of the Roman world because the execution of such men was an everyday event in rebel Palestine.

And as well as the re-writers turning the Jewish rebel Jesus into a Roman-loving mystic, as time went on strenuous efforts were made to make the Christian religion acceptable to the increasing number of rich recruits. So while the original was both revolutionary and communistic the re-writers imposed onto the gospel a mystic classless doctrine which eventually became the state religion of the Roman world. In Luke there are survivals of a bitter hatred of the rich in general and the promise to the poor that they will triumph with the kingdom of god. "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God" Luke has Jesus say in his famous Sermon on the Mount "Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled, blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh ... but woe unto you that are rich: for ye have received your consolation; woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep."

But in the later Matthew this has been changed into Jesus saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven ... Blessed are they who are hungry and thirsty for justice, for they shall have their fill." Thus Jesus was turned onto his head. The Kingdom of God which the Jews unambiguously understood to be egalitarian, communistic and real, to be of the earth, was transformed into something for the life after — a Gnostic Greek doctrine utterly alien and at odds with the real Jesus but perfectly acceptable to the rich who the Christian Church was out to win. No wonder Christianity did not just win the adherence of the rich and powerful, but became an ideological weapon used by the oppressors to get the oppressed to passively accept their lot.

Christianity triumphed only when it was transformed into the opposite of its original character. The victory of Christianity was not the victory of the poor and oppressed, but of the clergy which supported the imperial power, slavery, and the concentration of wealth in a few hands.

Geraldine Duffy

Law and Disorder



Phil Scraton *The State of the Police* Pluto Press, London 1985, pp.184, £4.95.
Ian Taylor *Law and Order: Arguments for Socialism* Macmillan Press, London 1981, pp.234, £4.95.

THE blurb of Scraton's book asks "Is Law and Order out of control? and How should we respond to the growing state of the police?" It is clear who the 'we' is, after scraping away hard. Then we find the 'we' is really those who want capitalist society to continue.

Scraton is promised as "providing some of the answers", but of course he doesn't. At least he doesn't for those of us who want to replace capitalism by socialism through smashing the capitalist state and achieving working class power.

The writer of the other book, Ian Taylor, was offering his placebos in the second year of Thatcher, so we can judge his offerings against events.

Taylor thinks that the Marxist conception of smashing the capitalist state machine as the transition to socialism in Britain has "no serious prospect" — or at least there is "no serious prospect of the emergence of revolutionary movements which have the capacity to destroy the existing state apparatus and replace it overnight".

So, he says, socialists have come increasingly to give serious attention to the construction of transitional or "prefiguration progress". And also to construct what he terms a "transitional socialist criminology".

What have this pair to offer as solutions to what they see as 'problems' of law and order (capitalist law and order) in times of capitalist decay.

Scraton: the police have shown forcefully they are beyond the control of democratic government. It is clear that the struggles for political accountability have been lost. What the 'left' should do is keep a watch on the Force. Monitoring, that is Scraton's answer. "Monitoring is not suggested as an alternative to the so-called democratic control of the police" writes this Liverpool lecturer on criminology, "but as the only alternative effective means by which police operational policies and practices can be opened to public scrutiny". Scraton seeks that socialists should stand by and interpret the world of the police, not change it.

As for Taylor (remember he's writing in 1980/81) he realises that the halcyon days of the juicy crumbs are fast disappearing. The stick replaces the carrot. The capitalist crisis deepens and class antagonisms become more acute.

"Prior to 1981", writes Taylor (another university criminology lecturer), "the concern of this book — with the political

preconditions of social order — might have appeared a little abstract or hypothetical".

Too right. St Paul's, Bristol, Southall, Brixton 1,2, and 3, Toxteth 1,2, and 3, Handsworth 1 and 2, the miners' strike, Warrington, Northern Ireland, the Devonport dockyard mateys, Peckham, and on and on ... all tell of different times. Taylor believes there is a fundamental assumption in British society (why are these people so shy of identifying British capitalist society?) that the 'underclass' will acquiesce to the housing, the work, and the social facilities it is offered, as well as the place it is assigned in the class structure. And that this assumption is "obviously at risk".

That's the trouble. This "underclass" (workers?) has a nasty habit of rebelling, and rebelling in the streets of all places.

Taylor's proposals are that the 'left' must declare itself in favour of the "proper policing of established working class residential areas and also areas of black settlements".

"Socialist reconstruction" he says "requires effective policing in order to work. Recruitment into the police of a cross section of all the interest groups in society would have to be encouraged".

Such terrifying lack of understanding of the role of the state in capitalist society, and especially in decaying capitalism, was also demonstrated by every slick-suited, slick-tongued £20,000 or £30,000 a year donkey or jackal who took the rostrum at the Labour Party conference. It is also deep in the thoughts of our Euros and Chaterites. The CPGB Executive statement of September even declared: "Many people feel that police do not understand the different cultures we have in the community. There is a thin dividing line between tackling crime through community policing and spying and interfering. To say this is not to express hostility to the police. A police force is a necessary part of society. What it does and how it does it should be the subject of public discretion and accountability". (our emphasis).

A week before, in the *Morning Star*, an editorial on Hansworth said: "Other inner city areas are also tinder boxes awaiting their own sparks. To remove the danger the fabric of society must be repaired. It means a reversal of this government's cut and cut again policies which always put profit before people ... The violence at Handsworth was a symptom of Thatcher's Britain 1985. Getting rid of the symptom means getting rid of the Tories." Get rid of the Tories, eh! Then who's going to repair the fabric of capitalist society: Rambo Kinnock, or Sir Oswald Owen?

The position of a party which declares it is guided by the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism should be, or rather is, quite plain.

The police are an arm of the capitalist state. It is the class struggle, the developing struggle, which leads to the overthrow of capitalist rule and the smashing of their state. According to Marx it is the creation of "order" which legalises and perpetuates the oppression by the capitalists — by moderating the conflict between the classes.

Lenin points out that petty bourgeois politicians believe that order means the reconciliation of classes, and not the reality of the oppression of one class by another. Opportunists consider reconciliation does not deprive the oppressed class of definite means and methods of struggle.

Monitoring, and repairing the social fabric, means castrating the working class, and making it stand of the sidelines. It means allowing police officers in battledress, truncheons drawn, riot shields high, confronting barehead miners in t-shirts and trainers.

The embryo hit squads, the self-defence groups of black workers, some stewards at demonstrations and sit-ins point the way to a clear class struggle attitude toward the police.

Scraton himself tells of the revolutionary days in Britain in 1833 when an inquest jury in London returned a verdict of justifiable homicide on a policeman who died when workers resisted attacks. The jury declared that the violent charge of the police deserved to be met with violence.

Between February and October 1917, between the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions, Lenin called for the replacement of the police by a universal militia of the whole population, women included. An armed militia. That was "a practical job that can and should be tackled immediately".

A revolution is not accomplished by newspapers sellers, soapbox speakers, or wishful thinking over pints. It comes as the climax of the class struggle itself. And the capitalists do not defend themselves with custard pies.

Here two po-faced academics have collated in great detail and with commendable painstaking efforts facts and opinions which show that policing in a capitalist Britain "is a bad thing". Their curate's bleatings offer no real solution to the young black and white harassed (to say the least) by some racist or thuggish policeman on the street. And their collection, of course, is outrun every day by the facts of life — by shootings of innocent children and women, by riots and resistance.

Tony Eastman

Centrist Hero

Gordon Wardman, *Crispin's Spur: A Novel*, Secker and Warburg, London 1985, pp.194, £8.95.

IF anyone out there in reader-land has got a centrist Christmas stocking to fill — this book is the answer. The novel is about the Communist Party. More importantly it is about centrist dreams and disillusionment.

Chris Powell is our centrist hero. Brought up in the labour movement of the north he finds his activities curtailed by a Party moving to the right who regard him as too hard-line. Disillusioned, he moves to Kent, changes his name to Crispin Pharaoh and peddles antiques. He keeps his Party card, but for all intents and purposes is out of touch with the developments in it.

Meanwhile the Party, in a reaction against the years of opportunism and in response to an increasing economic decline, takes a turn towards adventurism. The ordnance factory in Chris's home town is chosen as a regional target for sabotage in a national campaign. His old comrades need someone capable of organising such a scheme. Chris's reputation is still resonant and he is asked to return back north to mastermind the plan.

Crispin regards the whole scheme as adventurist lunacy, but partly because he is loyal to the Party and wants it to need him and partly because he is frustrated with his life and wants to do something he agrees to organise the blowing up of ROF Hardcoats.



Wardman: directionless

The novel unfolds many truths and characters recognisable to anyone whose political career has revolved around the Communist Party. Like Steve from the National Executive: "Steve spoke in a monotone, punctuated by regular and ineffective attempts at rhetoric, which amounted to little more than raising his voice and addressing them directly as 'comrades'." (p.35) Or Jacko, who they recruit to plant the explosives: "Crispin recognised the type, basically intelligent, but unstable, with natural talents unrecognised and underdeveloped which had never completely vanished, but had become distorted as a result of neglect. The veneer of charm masked a personal, and hence

political, psychopathy. He remembered what Lenin had said about revolutions attracting the very best and the very worst elements in the working class, and he remembered how many lads just like this he had turned away in his time." (p.103)

But most recognizable of all is Crispin: a comrade you could respect, endearing even, but flawed and limited by centrism. A victim of the opportunism in the Party, he cannot see the root from which these politics stemmed. In the course of his plan Crispin meets up with someone from his past, a Christian alcoholic journalist, who describes to another comrade how he came to know our hero: "partly through the anti-racism movement. I came into that through the Church. Some of the political people were suspicious of us — as we were of them — but not Chris." Chris replies "All sorts of different people, working together openly for a common end, which is exactly the way it should be." (p.49) A recipe for the broad democratic alliance if ever there was one, but this nostalgia for the past blinds him to the realities.

The truth is that Chris is a victim of centrism: he cannot go beyond what exists, he needs to be led by someone or something. "The Party destroys you all right, but it enables you to be destroyed with your dignity intact and that's important. It may not be much, but it's all I've got and I'm sticking with it." (p.137) This resignation, his feeling of being unable to do anything else but stay or drop out is so familiar it is saddening. And of course the whole scheme ends in tears. The Party backs out from the plan at the eleventh hour. Chris is betrayed once more.

The book ends without hope, only the disillusion of a centrist who doesn't know how to fight what is in reality the most important battle to be won if the working class is ever to win their victory, the battle of ideas.

It is a good novel, an amusing novel, a sad novel, a Party novel, but not a positive novel. It almost tries to justify dropping out. No wonder David Whitfield, when he reviewed it in the *Morning Star*, seemed to identify with it so much.

The book is a reflection of the decline of our Party, it is the expression of many who have become disillusioned and directionless. Read it, but be braver than the author-nostalgia for the past and sad regret for what the Party has become are no good to anyone, least of all the working class. This novel, although it does not intend to, tells us one thing: sink or swim. If you really want to see a genuine Communist Party in this country there is no choice but to fight the ideological battle for the Party and within it.

Geraldine Duffy

Leninist Origins

Neil Harding, (ed), *Marxism in Russia: Key Documents 1895-1906*, hdk pp.414, £27.50.

THIS excellent book gathers together key texts previously hard to locate or even not translated into English from the period of the 1880s to 1906 during which Russian Marxism evolved and developed its character and reputation. As Harding points out in flynotes to this volume, the Russian Marxists from their organisational genesis in 1883 with the founding of Plekhanov's 'Emancipation of Labour Group' "brought an originality and intellectual rigour second to none in the Marxist tradition" to the complex problems that faced them.

Pre-revolutionary Russia's position as an 'intermediate' great power standing halfway between the Asiatic backwardness of the East and the advanced West dictated that its political life in many ways took on unique features. For example, Russian Marxism from its inception faced a contradiction (and advantage in some senses) in that it emerged if not prior to certainly alongside the actual appearance of a Russian proletariat. This new working class of Russia obviously came into the world unburdened by past traditions of struggle, organisation, or political outlook. Thus the Russian Marxists intellectuals had "an almost clean sheet of infinite

possibilities and they were determined that what they wrote upon it would be word-perfect according to the textbooks of Marxism," (Introduction, p.2.).

And 'textbook' stuff it was too. Until 1905 the Russian Marxist movement was drawn almost *exclusively* from the ranks of the intelligentsia. Russian intellectuals like Plekhanov were drawn to the cause of the proletariat in the search for a force to transform the barbaric under-development of their country. By the last decade of the 19th century foreign capital, encouraged by Witte, had begun to develop Russian industry and with it, of course, its own gravedigger in the form of an industrial proletariat. Marxism gained a firm hold among intellectuals during this period precisely due to the fact that while Russian industry was expanding, and thus the social relations characteristic of modern capitalism were spreading through Russia, no corresponding bourgeois political philosophy like Western liberalism existed or was allowed to emerge. Intellectuals like Lavrov were actually aware that the leisure they enjoyed to pursue their 'critical thought' was made possible, especially in Russia, by the harsh exploitation of the vast majority. Thus it was hardly surprising that by the end of the 1870s Lavrov and intellectuals like him were inclining more and more towards Marxism.

It can be said that the depth and richness of the debates that animated the Russian Marxists and as exemplified by this collection has remained unsurpassed anywhere and at any time since. The intersection of the three conjunctural features of the Russian situation: the preponderance of intellectuals in the party, the 'clean sheet' nature of the workers' movement they were addressing themselves to and the complexity of the social problems facing the revolutionaries combined to produce some of the most outstanding and pivotal debates in the history of Marxism.



Plekhanov: drawn to the cause

But was all this 'hair-splitting' really necessary? After all, at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) in 1903, a solid *Iskra* group, including Lenin and future Mensheviks, voted as a block for much of the Congress, including for the key document of the party, its programme. Yet over the seemingly less controversial issue, the section of the rules defining membership, discord broke out between Martov's soft *Iskraists* and Lenin's 'hards'. Martov's looser formulation, that a member was someone who "renders it (the party — AL) regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organisations", in Lenin's own words gave "blessing" to "one of the basic evils of our party", the problem that in the prevailing conditions of illegality it was "extremely difficult, almost impossible to separate those who do the talking from those who do the work." (p.285)

Significantly, Lenin went on to make this seemingly insignificant point a matter of majority/minority representation on party committees and organisations. In effect Lenin initiated a factional battle over this statute:

"It is a matter," says Lenin, 'of foregoing a more or less pointed weapon through the paragraphs of the organisational statute. The deeper the sources of opportunism, the sharper the point must be.' " (R. Luxemburg,

Organisational Questions of Russian Social Democracy 1904 quoted on p.303)

The differences that rent Russian Marxism after 1903 appeared therefore to many outsiders (for example Kautsky) to represent minor almost 'personal' squabbles, not differences in principle and Lenin and the Bolsheviks were reviled internationally as incorrigible splitters. Yet didn't history prove that these organisational 'details' were but the expression of deeper political schisms? Were they not manifestations of differing attitudes to the role of the party in the coming revolutionary period and thus of differing attitudes to the nature of the revolution itself? Lenin's 'hair-splitting' was an indispensable component part of the struggle for a programmatically and organisationally homogeneous revolutionary vanguard without which talk of revolution is simply hot air. To that end all other considerations were totally subordinate.

Comrades should try their best to get hold of a copy of this excellent anthology of documents from the early years of Russian Marxism. Compare the richness and sharpness of debate with the timidity and turgid pussy-footing of what frequently passes for polemic in most Party publications (or rather those publications for whom 'polemic' has not become a dirty word). What Party tendency today can claim to stand in the tradition of the early Russian Marxists? The ex-Party, grey, deeply uncontroversial *Morning Star*, the trendy new *7 Days*, the dead-head Labourism of *Straight Left* ... or *The 'hair-splitting' Leninist*? It is only necessary to ask the question in order to answer it.

Alec Long

State Racism

Paul Gordon *Policing Immigration: Britain's Internal Controls* Pluto Press, London 1985. pp.120 £3.50.

PAUL GORDON presents the correct position that immigration controls are a direct result of the development of capitalism. Unfortunately what Gordon fails to point out is that racist immigration controls are a *necessity* of capitalism, not simply a particular 'policy'. During a 'boom' period (the book gives the obvious example of the post-war 1950s boom) immigration provides the ruling class with a cheap foreign labour force. This reserve army of labour function also dictates that this foreign labour section of the working class is thrown out of work quicker than other sections of the proletariat. Their position in the labour market, like that of women, is characterised by marked fluctuations and instability, depending on the dictates of capital accumulation. The marginal role that migrant workers play in social life also means that the defenders of the capitalist system can find a ready means of disguising the failings of their system by blaming crises on 'all these foreign workers coming and taking British jobs.' Immigration controls then serve the purpose of policing and disciplining this foreign reserve army of labour, firstly by regulating the speed with which this 'external' labour reserve can be exploited (i.e. how many immigrants are let in each year), and secondly by attempting to ensure that this stratum is never fully assimilated into the white British working class, that it remains peripheral and isolated.

Given therefore that the very functioning of the capitalist system depends on this reserve army, capital will try to avoid conceding equal rights for immigrants with the mass of the indigenous proletariat. To fulfil its role as a group that can be used to keep down labour costs, which can easily be drawn into social production and then just as easily thrown out, there must be barriers erected between it and the rest of the working class. Sectional divides such as racism (and of course sexism), therefore, are directly in the interests of capitalism and directly antagonistic to the interests of the working class.

The capitalist system therefore is directly

and irreformably racist. Its state implements policy that is racist in effect and intention. There is no disguise: where immigration controls end internal controls begin. This is perhaps the most useful information Gordon brings to light. Internal controls are basically a way of restricting and repressing non-indigenous peoples already settled in Britain. In practice what that means is that any 'non-white' person is subject to the threat of dawn raids and passport checks on suspicion of being an 'illegal' immigrant, a suspicion based on colour. Gordon details the way in which the systems of policing and surveillance by the welfare state are "increasing in number and expanding their resources." He gives examples of various state institutions demanding to see the passports of 'non-whites' to assess their eligibility for NHS treatment or schooling and also how the DHSS is able to check on the status of all 'non-whites' seeking a NHS number.

It is important, therefore, to recognise the power of this 'legitimate' form of state racism and to assess the implications of it for the class struggle. Immigration controls are used to oppress sections of the working class; in essence to divide the working class:

"Such a system of control served to prevent the integration of migrant labour into the indigenous working class and thereby to mediate class struggle" (Sivanandan, quoted on p.13).

Black oppression is inextricably linked with capitalist development and decline which all workers have an interest in overthrowing, at least in the long term. One of the limitations of this book, given Gordon's radical liberal prejudices, is that it fails to present this point strongly enough. It may present pious incantations about the 'inseparability' of white and black working class interests, but it is unable to back up the rhetoric with hard programmatic backbone.

For example, Gordon notes "the courts far from acting as a so-called bulwark between the state and the citizen actually strengthen the powers of the government to the extreme detriment of the black individual." (p.35) Obviously the same could be said about the imprisoned miners and miners awaiting trial. The bosses' courts will act to the detriment of *all* workers. It would be naive or simply stupid to think otherwise.

Sectionalism in our class, whether along racial or sexual lines, is dangerous. We have a long term class interest encompassing all proletarians which transcends nation, race, or sexual preference: racial oppression is thus an issue for the entire working class, not simply for that section of it which is directly affected by virtue of skin pigmentation.

So how can we combat racism effectively?

Does the answer lie in bland, idiotic statements such as in the *Morning Star*, that attacks on Asians are a "national disgrace". Are racist attacks a "national disgrace" to imperialist Britain when it is the country that has literally massacred and enslaved millions of people around the world for centuries? As it becomes more Labourite, and thus more pro-imperialist, the *Morning Star* is starting to make statements that, if we were not aware of the scandalous nature of the Farringdon Road clique's politics, would lead us to question no, simply Chater's principles but also his sanity.

Or perhaps we fight racism by championing the cause of banning the golliwog. Banishing racism from marmalade jars would mean very little to the black youth which has fought riot police in Brixton, Toxteth, and Tottenham: how empty and meaningless this kind of antiracist 'action' is.

Yet it is precisely this type of posturing that takes up so much of the time of the 'mass workers' party', the Labour Party. While the left of the party has wasted its time in these pointless tokenistic campaigns, their organisation has played a major governmental role in establishing the racist immigration system. They share with the openly pro-capitalist Tories "the belief that immigration control was good for race relations." (p.36) In point of fact, immigration controls are good for capitalism, not 'race relations'. The Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party which, however, has to maintain its image with workers as a reforming party. Thus we have seen its left big wigs parading around in Anti-Nazi League teeshirts, condemning apartheid, producing glossy 'I'm against

racism' packs (via the now doomed GLC), and all the time supporting immigration controls which are a barbaric capitalist weapon against black workers. Truly, hypocrisy is the stock in trade of Labour Party politicians.

Yet ironically the Labour Party is the party many 'non-whites' have turned to historically, understandably, but wrongly seeing the Tory party as the real instigator of immigration controls and internal checks. It must be the job of communists to expose this tired Labour Party charade. We must show black workers that the controls imposed on them are a necessary feature of the capitalist system and that non-communist political parties can only be at the mercy of such a system.



Paul Gordon's answer to the inherent racism of immigration controls is disappointing considering some of the poignant issues he raises throughout the book, but fairly typical of a liberal's approach to the problem. His solutions are on the one hand woolly: "Immigration could be and ought to be decriminalised, that is it should not be a part of the criminal law." (p.103); and on the other thoroughly reactionary: "such decriminalisation would also have an important symbolic effect in that it would serve to emphasise that breaches of the immigration law did not in any sense represent the serious threat to society which crime in the ordinary sense did."

'Symbolically' then, immigrants can breach the immigration law, but will not be tainted with the term criminal; the racist, repressive laws remain. Gordon, like many in our Communist Party, retains a faith that the bourgeois state can be induced, cajoled, or persuaded to treat immigrants 'fairly'.

"...people who enter or remain in the UK in breach of immigration laws would be dealt with by administrative measures which would be reviewable in the courts." (p.104) As far as we are concerned, the bosses' state is by definition rotten with racism to its core. As revolutionaries we refuse to accept or acquiesce to its jurisdiction. Bosses' courts simply enforce bosses' laws.

After arguing throughout his book that the courts are corrupt, that they interpret the laws selectively, that they discriminate against black individuals, that they are racist and part of the state machine, Gordon would nevertheless accept their right to sit in judgement over blacks and migrant workers.

Paul Gordon thus reflects the malaise of bourgeois liberalism when confronted by the unpleasant reality of Britain's barbaric immigration laws. Yes, they divide families; they throw foreign workers into misery, poverty, and despair; and given Britain's assiduously cultivated self-image as a protector of justice and an international haven from repression, they are simply 'inexcusable'. Yet the writer is at the same time 'pro' the very institution which enforces and provides the legislative framework of racism, the British bourgeois state, so what can a poor confused liberal do?

He can whinge, he can whine, he can plead with the state to be 'nicer'. What he can never do is adopt the only position which makes sense from a working class point of view: the smashing of *all* immigration controls.

Julie Ryan

The London-Dublin Accord Ireland will win

THE TRUTH about the London-Dublin Accord was let out by Northern Ireland secretary Tom King when he told an audience of businessmen in Brussels that it would make permanent Britain's occupation. According to King the Dublin government has recognised "for all practical purposes and in perpetuity that there will never be a united Ireland".

Although King had to apologise for putting his interpretation of the Accord into the mouth of the Dublin government what he said was undoubtedly true. It is possible that King's 'slip' was a clever ploy to reassure Loyalists in the Six Counties, but whatever the case the fact is that Fitzgerald's government has in fact conceded on a united Ireland. What is more as well as accepting the gerrymandered 'Protestant veto' Dublin has been further drawn into playing an auxiliary oppressive role for British imperialism.

The London-Dublin Accord always had strictly proscribed limits. In December 1984 Thatcher bluntly declared that she had made it clear to Dublin "that a united Ireland was one thing that was out... a confederation solution; that was out" as was "joint authority". Despite this Thatcher's willingness to negotiate in the first place is significant. It reflects the fact that increasingly Ireland is being forced to the top of the agenda in British political life.

Bashing the Provos

The immediate cause behind the signing of the Hillsborough agreement has been the electoral rise of Sinn Féin and the continuing military power of the IRA as proved by their devastatingly successful campaign against RUC stations.

In the Accord itself there is provision for a two tier system of co-operation. First an "Inter-governmental conference" which is no doubt mainly symbolic in giving the appearance of Britain granting Dublin a role in the Six Counties. The real thrust of the Accord though is a "secretariat of civil servants" and specialists (i.e. army and police chiefs) whose major working brief will be bashing the Provos.

Of course in certain respects the London-Dublin Accord has real dangers for both sides. The agreement gives token concessions to Dublin in order to give a boost to the flagging fortunes of the Fitzgerald government and the SDLP: the 'voice of constitutional nationalism' in the Six Counties. But the helping out with Britain's dirty work, the fact that no progress towards resolving the national question can be made, will be exploited by forces prepared to use the Armalite as well as the ballot box.

As to British imperialism it is in a Six Counties quagmire. Everything it does to get out only sees things getting more and more difficult. Direct intervention of British forces in 1969, Sunningdale, power sharing, direct rule have all failed and forced Britain to look for assistance in crushing the nationalist population. Given the explosive mixture which is the Six Counties there is every possibility that this assistance enshrined in the Accord will not only fail but inadvertently spread the fire of revolution.

The south

Twenty-six Counties Premier Fitzgerald has had to settle for a consultative role in the Six Counties not the executive one he originally



hoped for. Even to get this he had to concede recognition of the Northern Ireland statelet, and thus the partition of the country.

The Accord has the advantage for Britain of formalising and tidying up the cooperation in cross border security and hunting IRA freedom fighters. Fitzgerald will dress this up in nationalist rhetoric and claim it as an advance. But the more links between the RUC and the Garda are seen the more the population will come to see Fitzgerald as a British stooge.

Already before the signing of the Accord the security forces of Britain and the Twenty-six Counties had stepped up joint activity. This was symbolised by the handing back of Dominic McGlinchy for 'crimes' in the north. For over sixty years the Dublin courts backed off from extraditing republicans. Now all McGlinchy has been allowed are a mere 10 minutes by the Dublin authorities to see the body of his

dead daughter before being dragged back to jail in the British occupied north.

Inevitably, therefore, the Twenty-six Counties is being drawn into the mire. Its subservient position vis a vis British imperialism layed bare: it is now in danger of being affected by the revolutionary situation in the north. Its economy is dependent, shaky, and vulnerable. The social order is thus fragile and discontent is growing apace.

For Fitzgerald according to *The Guardian* the collaborationist Accord represents "the apex of a long political career." Hardly a very edifying epitaph. For the results of the latest opinion polls gave the opposition Fianna Fail a 19% lead over Fitzgerald's party. Accusations of "grovelling" and "selling out" have clearly had their effect. But worse will come. For despite Haughey's capitalising on the Accord he has been "careful to avoid

saying that if he came to power he would operate any agreement already in place". (*The Guardian* November 11, 1985)

This will create fertile conditions for revolutionary forces in the Twenty-six Counties. The weak southern bourgeoisie is being exposed, its economy is in crisis, the Accord signed to create conditions for dampening down the revolution in the north could therefore have the reverse effect.

The north

The abject failure of Britain's various forms and methods of rule in the Six Counties attest to the depth of the revolutionary situation that exists there. Now it has brought in Dublin to share in its attempt to resolve the crisis. This has the advantage, like "Ulsterisation", of getting the "paddies" to police themselves. This can be cost effective and politically useful.

And yet although the Accord is overtly aimed at defeating the forces of revolution and making permanent the link between Britain and the Six Counties the Loyalists are screaming sellout. Having originally confined their protests to constitutional manoeuvres things have now taken a turn towards violence and even rumblings about a re-run of the so-called Ulster Workers' Council strike which ended power sharing.

That thousands of Protestant workers are prepared to take political strike action against the Accord vividly indicates the psychology of a pro-imperialist labour aristocracy. The rabid and irrational fear of any hint of an all-Ireland dimension to Six Counties politics (even when it is designed to defeat the IRA) is dictated by one thing and one thing alone and that is a determination to preserve their privileges relative to the Catholics.

That workers at places like Harland and Wolf are prepared to down tools and follow a semi-fascist like Paisley is a product of corruption and fear. As in 1974 Protestant workers are being mobilised not against British imperialism but to pressurise British imperialism. These workers look for protection against the soaring unemployment and stagnating living standards not in workers' unity but unity with British imperialism. And this can even result in biting the hand that feeds them to the point of armed actions and threats of an 'Ulster' UDI.

While these actions and threats should not be dismissed as irrelevant (they do after all reflect the profound crisis of British imperialism in the Six Counties) it must be remembered that the relative privileges of the Protestant workers rest squarely on the link with Britain and connivance in discrimination against Catholics. To preserve their privileges the Protestant workers and their Loyalist semi-fascist leaders are prepared to stir a hornets nest for the British administration in the Six Counties.

This and the instability that must hit the Twenty-six Counties and of course the revolutionary situation in the north, will in our view deepen the crisis of British domination over Ireland. This creates the conditions not only for the revolutionary forces of the republican movement to advance dramatically but also the opening and stimulus for the working class in Ireland to begin to realise itself as a class. The wheels of progress are visibly moving.

Ireland is a weaklink of imperialism. The contradictions created both by British rule as well as the capitalist system itself are becoming increasingly acute. Faced with this the task of communists in Britain is clear: we must support unconditionally the democratic struggle of the republican movement against British imperialism. But as well as this we must do all in our power to enable our comrades in Ireland to take up the flag of James Connolly who seventy years ago united his proletarian Irish Citizens' Army with the forces of nationalism in a heroic effort to once and for all free Ireland of the British monster.

THE SPIRIT OF EASTER 1916
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FOR A REVOLUTIONARY
ALLIANCE BETWEEN REPUBLICANISM AND SOCIALISM!
VICTORY TO THE IRISH PEOPLE!
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